THE EMERGENCE OF THE PROLETARIAN NOVEL IN FRANCE (1890-1914) AND ITS CRITICAL RECEPTION : A STUDY OF THE WORKS OF CHARLES LOUIS-PHILIPPE, EMILE GUILLAUMIN, EUGÈNE LE ROY, MARGUERITE AUDOUX AND LUCIEN JEAN

James Edwin Holland

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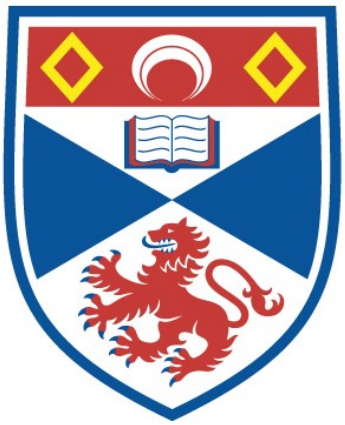

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ABSTRACT

There were two principal aims which inspired the writing of this thesis. The first was to fill a gap in English scholarship by presenting, in necessarily attenuated form, to English readers what scholars like Edouard Dolléans and Michel Ragon had provided for the French; namely, a description, in Part One, of the background to the proletarian involvement in literature --- and especially in novel writing --- which gathered rapid momentum during the quarter century before the First War. In so doing, this thesis attempts to analyse the connection between the proletarian novelists of the late nineteenth century and middle class naturalist, realist, romantic and classical writers who had earlier made use of the working class theme. It was the intention to demonstrate that, while offering new insights into the life of the indigent masses, these writers often relied heavily for style and theme on those established by their predecessors. The comparison could only be made by treating in detail selected representatives of this new development in literature, and this was aided by examining the opinions of contemporary critics. The precise reasons for choosing the five authors who appear in the title and for subjecting them to greatly varying degrees of examination are given at the beginning of Part Two. In general, however, these five may be seen as the group which exhibited at once the greatest similarity to established literary conventions and also the most striking originality in the development of their subject.

The second --- and predominant --- aim of this thesis was to present to an English readership the works of hitherto largely ignored novelists. Because of their obscurity, greater use of quotation and paraphrase was made than would have been necessary to discuss works of widely recognised authors. Part Two is a systematic evaluation of all the novels written by the five during the period 1890-1914. The limits of one thesis did not allow exhaustive treatment of any of the novelists and it is

hoped that one of the results of this study will be to stimulate further research into them. To that end as extensive a bibliography as possible has been compiled and appears in two sections at the end of this work.

I JAMES EDWIN HOLLAND hereby certify that this thesis which is approximately 100,000 words in length has been written by me, that it is the record of work carried out by me and that it has not been submitted in any previous application for a higher degree.

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CONTENTS

PART ONE

The Emerging Proletariat: Peasants and urban wage earners.

In introducing a study of the proletarian movement in French literature which began to emerge at the beginning of this century it is necessary to make several preliminary observations about what is meant by 'proletarian'. This work is devoted to an analysis of a literature produced for the first time on a large scale by, if not necessarily for, that social class generally identified as the 'workers'. The central themes which preoccupied the writers --- poverty, physical suffering and all forms of social injustice --- were being treated by those who had personal experience of them and not, as P.O. Walzer observed, by "bourgeois cossus qui 'se penchent sur' les misères du peuple". [1] This question of origin is the fundamental and most immediately apparent characteristic which distinguishes the proletarian genre from its predecessors.

'Proletarian' in this sense must not be confused with 'popular' or 'populist' literature. Popular literature, which includes among its variations the roman feuilleton, roman policier and roman-photo, is not often prized for its literary qualities, is an invention of the middle class and destined for the least discriminating reaches of the reading public. The 'populist' novel, to which Léon Lemonnier and André Thérive gave formal structure in the Manifeste du roman populiste (1930), was a conscientious attempt to employ working class themes but remained vulnerable to the criticism

1. Pierre-Olivier Walzer, Le XX^{e} siècle, Vol.I, 1896-1920, Paris 1975, p.227.

of being a bourgeois author's attempt to explain a way of life he could only have observed at one remove. The Ecole populiste was inaugurated in reaction to what was considered excessive psychological analysis in the novel, a development for which the example of Proust's A la recherche du temps perdu was held primarily responsible. The populists' aim was both to redirect the attention of writers back to literature inspired by the common people and also to oppose the concept that only born members of the proletariat were qualified to develop working class themes. It was their conviction that the two essential properties of a serious novelist were imagination and sympathy for the subject matter. [1.]

The works of the five authors which form the basis of this study must not be confused either with those produced later by the formally constituted Ecole prolétarienne. Formed in 1932 by the group of writers who contributed to Henry Poulaille's review Nouvel Age, this was a movement of working class purists who wanted to dissociate their work from that of the bourgeois populists. [2.] The novelist

1. See Christian Sénéchal, Les grands courants de la littérature française contemporaine, Paris 1941, pp. 246-247.

2. With the populists, however, the 'proletarians' shared the view that contemporary French literature had become too abstract and was beyond the average man's scope of experience. Two years before the founding of the Ecole prolétarienne Poulaille, in his book Nouvel Age littéraire had made this assessment of the current state of French literature: "Quand on déclare que la littérature moderne est supérieurement intelligente, on sous-entend cérébrale. Jamais, certes, la littérature et l'art n'ont été si gonflés d'intelligence /.../ C'est à qui sera plus intelligent que son voisin. Hélas nul ne se préoccupe d'être surtout simple, intelligible". (Paris 1930, pp. 110-111).

and poet Tristan Rémy defined the scope of the movement: "La vie du prolétariat racontée par des auteurs qui sortent de ses rangs, voilà la littérature prolétarienne". [1.] This raises the question whether class boundaries are in fact unassailable and whether authors are proscribed from writing about a class other than the one to which they by birth belong. Such questions will be examined at a later point in this study.

The term 'proletarian' is a broad one and is not used in this thesis in the restricted sense by which it has come to designate only the urban worker. It is synonymous with membership of the most impoverished sectors of French society and in this respect similar to the meaning given it as early as the sixteenth century by Montesquieu and later by Rousseau in his Contrat social. [2.] In its largest sense it covers domestic servants and all indigent wage-earners, whether in the workshop, in the fields or, indeed, behind a desk. [3.] In an era when labour

1. See Edouard Dolléans' preface to Michel Ragon's Histoire de la littérature ouvrière du Moyen Age à nos jours, Paris 1953, p.15.

2. Not until the nineteenth century and Marx was the expression 'proletariat' associated with industrial workers who sold their labour to an exploiting capitalist class. For further discussion of the literary signification of the term, see Jean Pérus, "De L'usage du mot „prolétariat„ en littérature", Europe, N° 575-576 (March-April 1977), pp.5-14.

3. My choice of labels is an arbitrary one. Other critics have made the same distinctions but employed different terms. Edouard Dolléans for example applies populaire to the meaning given prolétarien in this study: "[...] Si j'emploie l'expression de classes populaires, et non de classes ouvrières, c'est que les classes populaires, en France, se composent à la fois de ce que nous appelons la paysannerie et les populations ouvrières". (Féminisme et mouvement ouvrier: George Sand, Paris 1951, p.56). The important fact remains that the concept has a wider connotation than the strictly urban one usually given it.

organisation was generally ineffective, the common bond uniting all sections of the proletariat, together with a sizeable portion of the petite bourgeoisie, was a total lack of financial security. It was the distinction between pauvreté and misère, developed by Péguy in his De Jean Coste, which constituted the essential difference between the working and middle classes. Furthermore, for the true proletarian this condition was an unalterable one, while members of the expanding petite bourgeoisie, a considerable number of whom hovered constantly on the brink of bankruptcy, had been able at some point in their career to choose either to risk capital in a small private undertaking or remain wage earners, an option denied the average worker. [1.]

During the Belle Epoque when wealth was accummulating almost exponentially in the hands of an elite, making apparent the worst discrepancies between rich and poor, the term 'proletarian' signified as much as anything else a state of mind of the chronically poor. It was one conditioned by the fact that an individual was forced to live at subsistence level amidst a spectacle of national plenty, and not merely those superficial differences in dress, speech and social customs which characterise the working class of the twentieth century where many of the blatant inequalities between classes have been eroded. "Etre pauvre", wrote Jean Vaudal in his preface to

1. Paul Loffler in his Chronique de la littérature prolétarienne française de 1930 à 1939 (1967), ignores the psychological importance implicit in such a choice and joins both groups under a common heading: "[...] peuple (ce mot rassemble en France, la petite bourgeoisie avec les artisans et le prolétariat ouvrier et paysan) [...]" (p.7)

Charles-Louis Philippe's Père Perdrix, "ce n'est pas seulement manquer de tout, c'est n'avoir plus que des idées, des sentiments, des sensations de pauvre. Voilà ce que les bourgeois, avec leurs paroles nourries des mêmes viandes que leur chair, ne comprendront jamais." [1.] Common in all divisions of the proletariat was the incapacity to create a buffer between themselves and financial ruin. It was this absence of an alternative which distinguished them from even the petite bourgeoisie, whom they resembled in many ways, and set them apart from all other levels of middle and upper class society. Any writing which they produced might be expected to differ significantly from the great mass of French literature which, to the start of the Great War, had been the preserve of the moneyed classes.

As long as a considerable section of society continued to exist not only in poverty but on a level where even the essentials could not be guaranteed, a 'proletariat' may be said to have existed as a recognisable social class. The effectiveness of labour organisation which developed slowly during the final years of the nineteenth and opening decade of the twentieth century and grew, despite the hiatus of the First War, signalled a transformation in the character of the proletariat and the literature peculiar to it. If the modern trade union movement has no more been able in France than elsewhere to lead the masses into the land of plenty it has at least provided them with a minimum standard of material security. The twentieth century has witnessed

1. Charles-Louis Philippe, Le Père Perdrix, Paris 1948, p.xxx.

the general disappearance of misère as a primary social problem and the labour movement has concentrated on the more daunting task of alleviating pauvreté by a socialist programme of wealth distribution. [1].

This process only began to make significant gains after World War I, and the natural break provided by the 1914-1918 conflict assumed the aspect of a watershed in French social evolution. As the nature of the working class changed, so necessarily did the literature produced by the people. The period between 1890 and 1914 was an important and unique stage in the development of working class literature, producing as it did both the first and the final literary expression of a section of society that had for centuries suffered in silence. It was a relatively short lived period because it depended on the timely convergence of various social and political forces as well as on the economic repression of the people. Once the tension created by blatant economic injustice diminished, working class literature continued to develop, but did so in a different direction. As the materially deprived proletariat steadily gave ground to a new and comparatively affluent generation of workers, 'proletarian literature' as the expression of an early formative period of class struggle made room for the more orthodox socialist

1. See the chapter on "Pauvreté et misère" in Joseph Aynard's Justice ou charité? (Paris, 1945). "/.../ La pauvreté relative, c'est-à-dire une moindre richesse, ne disparaîtra jamais de de nos sociétés humaines /tandis que/ la misère, c'est-à-dire l'indigence absolue, le manque des moyens de vivre comme le corps et l'âme l'exigent pour se développer, pourra être un jour une chose du passé /.../" (p.3)

literature which has monopolised the working class subject ever since. [1.]

During the twenty-five years before the First War when the French cities were experiencing a drastic increase in population, the constitution of the proletariat remained distinctly rural. This was a direct result of accelerating depopulation of the countryside as more and more of the younger generation of peasants, often fleeing the injustices of the métayage system of land tenure, moved to the cities in search of both high wages and job security. Under this métayage system, prevalent in the Garonne valley, the western provinces, certain parts of the Midi and especially the Landes and Bourbonnais regions, the peasant tenant or métayer made a contract with the landowner from whom he received a farm in exchange for a share of the produce. The terms of such agreements varied greatly, but were often crippling for the sharecropper. The authority of the landowner was absolute, and failure to honour the contract could result in the eviction of the labourer and his family with little or no notice.

Métayage had its roots in the mediaeval structure of land tenure and was still well established by the mid-nineteenth century. Before the Revolution sharecropping

1. See the article by Yves Florenne, "Littérature prolétarienne" in Le Monde, 26-27 June 1977, p.19. "Heur et malheur: /la littérature prolétarienne/ n'est vivante que lorsque le prolétariat est opprimé; s'il l'emporte, elle n'est plus que passé dépassé /.../ Elle n'a plus de sens dans une société socialiste, où la littérature est --- ou devrait être --- purement et simplement „socialiste„."

was the prevalent form of tenancy and by the 1830's between one half and one third of France was farmed in this manner. The feudal origins of métayage were apparent in such nineteenth century survivals as the impôt colonique (cash payment to the landowner) and other duties --- still known as corvées --- like free carting, and domestic help from the tenant's wife. [1.] The injustices of the system were a major concern to both the peasant novelists included in this study, Emile Guillaumin and his predecessor Eugène Le Roy and, as will be shown, constitute a recurring theme in the works of both novelists.

The Industrial Revolution really only began to make an appreciable impact on French society by the beginning of the Third Republic. It had gathered full momentum between 1890 and 1914 and attracted a steady supply of cheap labour to the cities from the rural areas. This general pattern of urban growth, immediately obvious in the capital, was in contrast to a period of uncertain markets and fluctuating prices for agricultural produce. [2.] To add to the instability of the rural situation certain provisions of the Code Civil regarding the peasant, including the restriction of the right to

1. See Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945, Vol.I (Oxford, 1973), pp. 160-162.

2. Predictably, as the country drifted closer to war, farm prices improved. However, for details of the general slump between 1880-1900 see the peasant Emile Guillaumin's Panorama de l'évolution paysanne, (Paris 1936), p.23. He also suggests that conditions to which tenants had to agree under the métayage arrangement tended to become harsher during this period.

dispose of his property by testament and the obligation to divide land equally among his descendants, had tended to undermine the traditional cohesion of the peasant family unit and this fostered the drift to the cities.

Although the members of the new social class emerging rapidly in Paris assumed the generic label ouvriers, they retained close links with the provinces either in their own right or at one remove through their parents. This was equally true of those 'immigrants', like Philippe, absorbed by the expanding bureaucracy in government departments made necessary by a process of centralisation which had remained unchecked since the beginning of the Second Empire. Of the five worker-writers examined in this study, the three which may properly be described as 'urban' by virtue of their residence in Paris --- Philippe, Jean and Marguerite Audoux --- all had immediate roots in the provinces. Philippe and Audoux were both born in the Bourbonnais, while Jean was the son of Parisian labourers who had moved from Alsace.

With hindsight, it seems inevitable that some sort of workers' literature should have developed in France at this time. Various threads of both social and literary history had come together whose interaction provided a uniquely favourable atmosphere for the growth of the new genre.

Of fundamental importance had been the work of Jules Ferry who, as Minister for Public Education, had engineered the 1882 laws requiring obligatory, free and secular primary education for both sexes between the ages of 6 and 13 years. Christophe Campos is surely

being too optimistic when, in his essay on "Social Romanticism", he claims that "[...] the Guizot and Falloux acts of 1833-35 made universal primary education a national norm, so that by 1845 an illiterate adolescent was an exception". [1.] To be more precise, the effects of the education law of 1833 proposed by Guizot as Minister was to require every commune to have a primary school and a schoolmaster but, as Professor Johnson has observed, it made education neither free nor compulsory. [2.] It should be emphasised as well that literacy is a relative concept and the quality of the education offered was low. Simply teaching the people to read and write did not suddenly endow them with an ability to create or appreciate literature. [3.] The loi Falloux which was not passed until 1850 concerned primarily the freedom of secondary and university education and so affected only the middle and upper classes. [4.] It remained for Jules Ferry and the

1. John Cruickshank (ed.), French Literature and its Background, Vol. 4, The Early Nineteenth Century, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.59 .

2. See Douglas Johnson's chapter on "French History and Society since 1789" in France: A Companion to French Studies, D.G. Charlton (ed.), London 1972, p.157.

3. A.J. George makes the same error as Campos in overestimating the scope of these first efforts in educating the masses. He does, however, concede that "primary schooling might endow a large number of citizens with the ability to count and to decipher simple sentences, but it almost eliminated readers of any material demanding acquaintance with tradition or sensitivity to the subtleties of the written word". (The Development of French Romanticism: The Impact of the Industrial Revolution on Literature, Syracuse University Press, 1955, p.23).

4. See David Thomson, Democracy in France since 1870, Oxford University Press, 1969, p.35.

series of reforms between 1881-1884 to effect a widespread and fundamental change in the complexion of French primary education.

The workers of the generation immediately preceding the War were the first of their class to benefit widely from a rudimentary education whose greatest service was to render them literate. This had the obvious significance for the development of a workers' literature that it both equipped with basic skills those who were drawn to a literary career and provided them with a potential reading public sympathetic to their efforts. The importance of this development was magnified because it coincided with advances made in a publishing industry gearing itself to mass markets by bulk manufacturing of cheap editions. The extension to the working class of the opportunity to create literature was matched by their increased potential to purchase it. [1.]

In 1875, primarily at the instigation of the radical Leon Gambetta, the Third Republic adopted the principle of universal male suffrage in national elections. Although conservative and republican politicians alike made sure an adequate system of checks was erected between the people and direct power, the potential influence to be wielded by a consolidated mass of workers was not lost on the proletariat and provided the broadest possible incentive to organise themselves into a recognisable political unit. Admittedly, recognition of this potential did not elicit a uniform

1. See Charles Seignobos, A History of the French People, London 1939, p.378.

political response from the people. As industrialisation continued in the cities and wealth was monopolised in the hands of the factory owners, socialist propaganda did not fall on deaf ears. In increasing numbers the urban workers lent their support to left wing candidates in the elections. In the countryside, however, an opposite trend was discernible.

Over the period 1890-1914 the general tendency in rural France was away from large landholdings towards small farms owned by individual peasant families. Paul Vernois in his study of the roman rustique draws the logical conclusion that the political consequence for the rural worker was to push him in the opposite direction from his counterpart in the cities. The peasant, whenever he could satisfy the desire to own the land he worked, tended towards political conservatism. It was an effort to consolidate his new position and a natural expression of resistance to all socialist inspired theories of collectivism. [1.] Charles Péguy, in his De Jean Coste, made the same point by defining the difference between misère and pauvreté. The dividing line was drawn between those able to remain at subsistence level only on a day to day basis by virtue of constant labour, and those whose living was protected from unforeseen misfortune by however small a reserve of capital. The difference between the misérables and the pauvres was a degree of security. If the opportunity arose to cross the boundary and acquire such security in the form

1. See Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, Paris 1962, p.127.

of land, the paysan propriétaire immediately allied himself with the middle class against his own kind; "Les partis de conservation n'ont pas de plus nombreux contingent, de plus compact, et solide, que celui des pauvres évadés de la misère, assurés contre la misère; anciens misérables ils ont conservé de la misère une mémoire si redoutée que ce qu'ils redoutent le plus c'est le risque". [1].

As the migration to the cities increased, a heightened class consciousness developed among urban workers at a speed which would have been impossible in a rural environment. The peasant's attitudes continued to be moulded by his obligations to the land he tilled and, often, to the master for whom he worked. He lived isolated with his family on the farm and journeyed to the local town only on Sundays to hear Mass, and on market days. Although road and rail links underwent constant improvement over this period, travel in the countryside remained relatively primitive and journeys outside one's own commune were almost unthinkable. By contrast, the growing numbers of urban workers were becoming sophisticated. Herded together within the bounds of a city and subjected to the mechanical conformity demanded by employment in industry or government bureaucracy, the worker shed much of his former parochialism and yielded to the recognition of a common interest with his neighbour. The government facilitated this process of cohesion by legalising trade unions in 1884, and working class

1. See Henry Poulaille, Nouvel Age littéraire, p.89.

solidarity acquired a new dimension in 1895 with the birth of the Confédération Générale du Travail at Limoges.

Although this initial labour movement was centred on the urban ouvrier, similar development did take place, although later, among both white collar workers and the peasants. In 1904 Lucien Jean, an employee at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, founded the Syndicat des Employés Municipaux at about the same time that Emile Guillaumin was trying to organise his fellow peasants in the Bourbonnais. [1.] With his friend Michel Bernard, Guillaumin had been one of the founders of the Fédération des syndicats de cultivateurs de la région bourbonnaise at Moulins in December 1905. By nature more suspicious of change than the urban labourers, the rural workers proved difficult colleagues for the Bourbonnais novelist, and although it enjoyed a brief period of modest success, the association had foundered by the beginning of 1912. [2.] Ultimately unsuccessful in his attempt to rally the peasant work force, Guillaumin nonetheless put the experience to use by making it the subject of his final novel, Le Syndicat de Baugignoux (1912).

1. See Louis Lanoizelée, Lucien Jean: L'écrivain-l'apôtre, Paris 1952, p.36.

2. They also established a newspaper, the Travailleur rural, which Guillaumin directed and which was the propaganda organ of the association. A total of twenty-six issues were published between the years 1906 and 1913 (See Louis Lanoizelée, Emile Guillaumin, Ecrivain et paysan, Paris 1952, pp.43-44).

Historical Background: Social and literary.

A Summary of the peasant's position in French literature.

The historical developments which had occasioned a rapid growth of the industrial work force and stimulated class identity amongst all sectors of an increasingly articulate proletariat, were assisted in bringing the people into the cultural life of the nation by the direction which French literary history had been taking.

The lowest social orders have never been absent from French literature, but until the flowering of a distinctly proletarian movement at the end of the nineteenth century the picture that had emerged of the working class lacked a balance of perspective. This is not surprising when one considers that the average worker had never previously been capable of writing about himself and was at the mercy of interpretation by his social superiors. Their attitudes toward him could be either benign or hostile, depending to some extent on the personality of the individual writer involved and of the climate of social opinion of the age.

Although the urban proletariat as an oppressed yet increasingly self-conscious class --- distinct from the earlier artisanat comprised of self-employed craftsmen --- was a product of the nineteenth century, the figure of the peasant in French literature may be traced back to the Middle Ages. If the literature of that period showed no concern for the material suffering of the labourer, it is clear that the peasantry was regarded as a disruptive class and a potential threat to the social order of the mediaeval

community. Ignorance of the appalling circumstances in which the peasant lived both precluded any attempt to alleviate the suffering and prompted the ruling class to view the uprisings of the period not as acts of desperation but as wanton rebellion against a divinely inspired social hierarchy. The Jacquerie of 1358, the peasant rebellion provoked by the abject living conditions which followed the war against the English, was the major event which stamped upon the mediaeval mind the image of the peasants as dangerous gredins. Froissart, writing after the incident referred to them as "ces méchantes gens" and explained the origin of the term Jacques traditionally applied to the peasant: "/Les émeutiers/ avaient fait un roi entre eux qui était, comme on le disait, de Clermont en Beauvaisis, et l'élurent le pire des mauvais; et ce roi on appelait Jacques Bonhomme". [1] It was precisely for its revolutionary overtones, so abhorrent to Froissart, that five centuries later Eugène Le Roy incorporated the expression into the title of his Jacquou le croquant (1900), which depicts peasant suffering under the Restoration.

The other literary convention surrounding the peasant is the sympathetic, often sentimental, treatment which is generally associated with the rustic novels of George Sand. This tradition, which had its roots in the idylls of Homer and Virgil, entered French literature in the sixteenth century from Italy and Spain in the form of the Pastoral. In essence the Pastoral was the combining of the stylised

1. Michel Arland, Le Paysan français à travers la littérature, Paris 1941, p.26.

concept of courtly love with the pagan element of instinct. Woman was removed from her mediaeval pedestal and attraction between the sexes portrayed with more of the natural spontaneity of real life. One of its forms, the bergerie, occupied both poets and dramatists in the lyrical evocation of shepherds and shepherdesses amid the beauties of a countryside peopled with mythological figures and spirits. Such writers as Belleau, Nicolas de Montreux and Racan established an indulgent, if unreal, attitude towards the habitant which, understandably after the Fronde, found more genuinely sympathetic expression in the concern of both La Bruyère and Fénelon for the spectre of the starving peasant. The evolution of this sympathy for the rural community culminated in the works of Rousseau whose influence on succeeding generations established him as the initiator of the modern romantic tendency to idealise the countryside. Directly opposed to the mediaeval tradition of regarding him as an object of fear or hatred, Rousseau saw in the peasant and his way of life a cure for the ills of modern European society. Both man and agricultural labour were seen as intrinsically good. If the workers' lot degenerated into ignorance and poverty it was a result of exploitation from socially 'superior' classes.

No one was more persistent than George Sand in moulding Rousseau's rustic philosophy into the form of the novel. If the powdered wigs and ribboned staffs with which the eighteenth century pre-romantic imagination festooned the rural worker were no longer in evidence, Sand did perpetuate the peasant idyll well into the

nineteenth century. Her cult of the Berrichon peasantry inspired the three works --- La Mare au diable (1846), La Petite Fadette (1848) and François le champi (1850) --- upon which her reputation as a novelist largely depends. Such notoriety should not obscure the very keen interest she also took in the urban worker and the development of his literary capabilities; an interest which merits more than passing mention.

During the period preceding the revolution of 1848, inspired by the socialism of Pierre Leroux ("mon ami et mon maître") and sharing the vision of the cité fraternelle of so many liberals of the day, Sand undertook to befriend and encourage several of the worker-poets making their debut in the capital. Decidedly mediocre poets, they were nonetheless significant in that they represented the literary effort of a first wave of the modern proletariat thrown up by the initial stages of the Industrial Revolution. Sand's letter to one of their number Charles Poncy, a poète-maçon, revealed her firm belief in a contribution to literature that only the workers could make. To-day she would be accused of some sort of inverse elitism: "Si bon, si beau, si grand que soit un homme, du moment qu'il est né dans la noblesse ou dans la bourgeoisie, et qu'il s'y est développé, il ne comprend pas le peuple". [1] She also allied herself with two others, Magu and Agricol Perdiguier whose presence, together with Poncy's, is discernible in Sand's 'socio-political' novels Le Compagnon du Tour de France (1840), Le Meunier d'Angibault (1845)

1. Samuel Rocheblave, "George Sand: Lettres à Poncy. Vers la révolution (1842-1848)", Revue des deux mondes, 1 August 1909, p.618.

and Le Péché de M. Antoine (1847). These novels certainly do not represent her best work and critics disagree about the effect which her infatuation with the proletariat at this stage of her career had on her writing. The staunchly traditionalist critic René Doumic, writing before the outbreak of the First War and during a period in which the public was confronted with an increasing number of proletarian works, left no doubt about his contempt for these early precursors, these "prolétaires atteints de la manie d'écrire": "Tout ce monde, que nous trouvons tour à tour chez les libraires et dans les journaux, en prison et à l'Assemblée nationale, et partout enfin, sauf à l'atelier, prit George Sand pour correspondante, pour commanditaire, --- et pour dupe [...] Multipliez Leroux par Perdiguier, et conjugez Perdiguier avec Magu et Poncy, vous avez Le Compagnon du Tour de France, Le Meunier d'Angibault, et Le Péché de M. Antoine". [1]

During the last years of the romantic era in the French novel George Sand produced a composite portrait of the peasantry which was truly reactionary. Out to counter what she considered the malicious exaggeration of Balzac's Les Paysans, she refused to equate réalité with vérité and reverted to the idealistic stylisation of the sixteenth and seventeenth century bergeries. "Avec elle", writes Marc Ballot in an article on Eugène Le Roy, "un autre paysan entre dans la littérature, d'une mentalité toute virgilienne, aux expressions faussement naïves". [2] The attraction that

1. René Doumic, "Dix ans de la vie de George Sand", Revue des deux mondes, 15 April 1912, pp.911-922. For a less acerbic evaluation, see Edouard Dolléans, Féminisme et mouvement ouvrier: George Sand, p.42.

2. Marc Ballot, "La Place d'Eugène Le Roy dans la littérature française", Europe, May 1957, p.24.

the peasantry held for her was in part a natural extension of that concern for the humble inherent in her romantic attachment to socialism. It was also, and more importantly, indicative of the sense of refuge from the turmoil of her private life which she felt among the rural community at Nohant.

It is ironic that in her efforts to recapture in her novels the essence of the rural character she to a certain extent negated the very qualities which attracted her. Simplicity of action and emotion is what she sought, and found, amongst the peasants but in her writing she frequently transformed this simplicity of subject into sentimentality on the part of her created characters. The discrepancy was marked in François le champi where Sand's narrator was less free than had been the case in La Mare au diable because he was tied to the convention of retelling a story heard previously from two peasants. In the earlier work the narrator's idealism could properly have been considered a tool in the author's legitimate role as interpreter of what she saw as the essence of country life. In François le champi, however, any excess of stylisation can be criticised as failure to be true to the peasant source of the story. In comparison to the sober and taciturn peasants of Le Roy or Guillaumin, whose character is revealed at least as much by their physical movement as by the words actually spoken, Madeleine's professions of maternal love for François appear theatrical: "Viens, mon pauvre François. Tu n'es plus champi, entends-tu? Tu as une mère, et tu peux l'aimer à ton aise; elle te le rendra de tout son coeur". [1]

1. François le champi, Paris 1962, p.247.

Sand, always conscious of the difference in expression between herself and the peasants, felt it necessary in this instance to add the following caveat in a device meant to excuse Madeleine's exuberance: "Madeleine disait ces paroles-là sans trop savoir ce qu'elle disait". (François le champi, p.247). Similarly, it would be difficult to imagine Guillaumin's peasants uttering anything similar to young François' pledge of loyalty to Madeleine: "Je dis que je souffrirais toutes les peines que peut avoir un homme vivant vie mortelle, et que je serais encore content en pensant que Madeleine Blanchet a de l'amitié pour moi". [1.]

If Sand's rustic novels lack the illusion of reality, they remain significant as a stylistic experiment. Sand sought a compromise between the peasant idiom of her subjects and the literary French necessary to make her books comprehensible to the general public. As early as 1833 with Valentine she had tried to infiltrate a formal style with words and turns of phrase taken from dialect. These attempts continued, although halfheartedly, in Mauprat (1837) and Jeanne (1844) but not until La Petite Fadette (1848), François le champi and Les Maîtres sonneurs (1852) did she make a concerted effort to effect the compromise.

Despite her descent through her father's family from a Polish king, Sand valued the working class origins of her mother and never doubted her own intuitive understanding of the people. What she did doubt was her ability to

1. Ibid., p.271.

convey this insight in her writing. In her Notice to La Mare au diable she exposed the problem: "J'ai bien vu, j'ai bien senti le beau dans le simple, mais voir et peindre sont deux!" [1]. In the Appendice the narrator makes it clear that the story of Marie and Germain is a translation from the peasant dialect; a necessary translation because "ces gens-là parlent trop français pour nous, et, depuis Rabelais et Montaigne, les progrès de la langue nous ont fait perdre bien des vieilles richesses". [2]. In fact George Sand's use of individual words of patois in La Mare au diable is infrequent. [3]. More common are the peasant turns of phrase which, 'translated' from the dialect, are of some use in establishing an appropriately rustic atmosphere. Sand's peasants speak not of 'horses' or 'sheep', but rather of "la bête chevaline" or "les bêtes à laine". Unfortunately there is no satisfactory integration of these expressions into the general style of the work and most often Sand feels compelled to signal their appearance by using italics or by providing in parentheses explanations of the terms. [4].

1. La Mare au diable, Paris 1962, p.5.

2. Ibid., p.131.

3. In the Gallimard edition of 1973, editor Léon Cellier gives a glossary of only twenty-three such usages.

4. See p.91 "Mes chiens ont jappe à nuitée /sic/" and p.128 "/.../ Je viens te faire de la peine et t'ennuyer, je le sais bien; mais l'homme et la femme de chez nous /sic/ (désignant ainsi, selon l'usage, les chefs de famille) veulent que je te parle /.../".

Nowhere did any of the later proletarian novelists articulate more clearly the problem of language confronting them in trying to write about the lower classes than did George Sand in the avant-propos to François le champi: "[...] C'est pour moi une cause de désespoir que d'être forcée d'écrire la langue de l'Académie, quand j'en sais beaucoup mieux une autre qui est si supérieure pour rendre tout un ordre d'émotions, de sentiments et de pensées". [1.] Pursuing the point she conveys the nature of the paradox in terms of a peasant subject, but could equally have substituted any other section of the working class: "Si je fais parler l'homme des champs comme il parle, il faut une traduction en regard pour le lecteur civilisé, si je le fais parler comme nous, j'en fais un être impossible, auquel il faut supposer un ordre d'idées qu'il n'a pas". [2.]

Sand's heightened appreciation of the problems regrettably brought no corresponding innovations in her style. Her response was simply to inject greater quantities of patois into the body of the narrative hoping thereby to enhance its rustic character. Although in many cases she chose to gallicise the spelling of the words in order to present "les formes non pas les plus authentiques, mais celles qui choquent le moins", [3.] the general effect of her efforts was a negative one. Le Roy's Moulin du Frau or Jacquou le croquant eased these 'foreign' elements

1. François le champi, Paris 1962, p.212.
2. Ibid., p.215.
3. Editors' foreword to François le champi by P. Salomon and J. Mallion, p.190.

into the narrative by introducing them first in their proper context, giving the reader the opportunity to deduce the meaning, and then repeating them until they became part of his working vocabulary. François le champi, however, presented the reader with a linguistic fait accompli, often using the words only once and leaving the impression that the provincialisms were artificially superimposed onto the central literary structure. Sand's main concern being for the rustic charm of her work, she showed herself less than conscientious in her choice of vocabulary. Apart from arbitrarily altering local expressions, she borrowed words from old French, showing a special preference for Rabelais, and frequently added examples of her own invention. [1.] Her attempts at solving the problem she set for herself seem awkward and obtrusive. They did, however, both anticipate and serve to measure the progress made half a century later by her proletarian successors.

Both the mediaeval attitude of suspicion and fear of the peasant and the romantic impulse to idealise him managed to coexist in the French literary tradition up to the First War. Vernois emphasises that the influence of "la vieille tradition médiévale qui faisait du paysan un vilain, un rustre et un grotesque" [2.] was still perceptible at the beginning of the nineteenth century, despite the rapid growth in popularity of pre-romantic fiction heralded by the publication in 1787 of Paul et Virginie.

1. See pp.230 n.2, 234 n.1, 298 n., 311 n., 325 n.

2. Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.26.

Its influence on Balzac is unmistakable in Les Paysans where the author's prejudices in favour of legitimist nobility coloured his portrait of the peasants to the point of caricature. Indeed the veritable peasantry plays no significant role in the novel. Balzac ignored the figure of the worker truly tied to the land by his labour, and concentrated instead on depicting a community of scoundrels whose aim was the destruction of the Comte de Montcornet's estate and who were, in the author's eyes, "diminished to the level of predatory animals, all appetite and cunning."[1]. In so doing he denied his intended subject any claim to respectability they might conceivably have possessed by virtue of a demanding task dutifully fulfilled, and insisted instead on the moral and physical degradation of an irrelevant substratum of the rural community.

Descriptive realism as it developed during the thirty years from mid-century to the appearance in France of the Russian novel [2]. sustained this unflattering image of the peasantry. The desire to mould literature to life, 'warts and all', was particularly evident in Maupassant's treatment of the rural subject. That he considered country life worthy

1. S.B. John, "Balzac", French Literature and its Background, Vol.4, The Early Nineteenth Century, p.118. That this pessimistic appraisal of the peasant was in fact a departure from Balzac's earlier hopes for regeneration of the countryside, as expressed in Le Médecin de campagne (1833) and Le Curé de village (1839), is discussed by Christophe Campos in his essay on "Social Romanticism" (Ibid., pp.70-71).

2. Tolstoy's War and Peace was first translated into French in 1879 and in 1885 Anna Karenina made its appearance. Dostoievsky's Insulted and Injured and Crime and Punishment were both published in French editions in 1884.

of serious literary development is obvious from the fact that, during his most creative years between 1880 and 1890, he produced more than thirty rustic tales, short stories and novels. Although interested in a study of the moeurs campagnardes Maupassant was in no way 'socially aware' in the sense that term was applied to the later peasant-writers. He was no friend of conservative bourgeois society and an anti-clerical, but he did not introduce into his writing the pattern of class antagonism that marked the novels of Philippe, Guillaumin and Le Roy. His interest in the peasants was an aesthetic rather than a political or sociological one. [1.] This remains true even after 1884 when the publication of L'Aveu and Une Vente marked a certain softening in his portrait of the terrien whose greed, conceit and cruelty had been to the fore in stories like Les Sabots (1883), La Mère aux monstres (1883) and Coco (1884). Even if, as Paul Vernois suggests, this moderation owed something to the influence of Dostoievsky and Tolstoy, Maupassant's attitude to the peasantry remained essentially pessimistic. Stylistic brilliance notwithstanding, this outlook rapidly appeared dated as, after his death, the humanism of the Russian writers gained increasing influence. During the rebirth of idealism in the last decade of the century Maupassant was placed with Zola and treated by a new generation of novelists, despite an undeniable technical merit, as a writer whose example it was necessary to counter.

1. In his stimulating article on "Maupassant, auteur rustique", Paul Vernois remarks that: "Ecrivant dix ans avant Le Roy, vingt ans avant Guillaumin, il semble ignorer totalement les difficultés de l'agriculture française [...] Maupassant n'envisage pas d'épauler le naturalisme dans son combat républicain." (Travaux de linguistique et de littérature, II, Strasbourg 1964, p.120).

If the general tenor of his peasant works became unpopular, Maupassant's relative success with the problem of language justifiably earned him widespread respect, not least among the regionalist and peasant novelists particularly alive to the difficulties involved. Increasingly during the 1880's the presence of the Norman dialect in Maupassant's style was discernible. [1.] As we have seen, George Sand's approach to the stylistic problem thirty years earlier had been to combine in her narrative an ever increasing amount of transcribed patois with translations and explanatory notes. This damaged not only the continuity of her novels but also imposed an oppressive authorial presence. Eugene Sue's half-hearted attempt to embellish his prose with a sprinkling of locutions argotiques had been even less satisfactory. Maupassant's approach was not slavishly to transcribe Norman speech which would be incomprehensible to his reading public. Working within a consistent pattern of rules he reproduced the sounds as well as the vocabulary of the dialect. He also rendered a sensitive deformation of the orthography, bringing the various provincialisms closer to a recognisable French form, while at the same time recasting familiar French expressions into the Norman idiom. [2.] Maupassant was always careful, however,

1. Vernois considers the publication of Une Vente (1884) to mark the start of this escalating importance of provincial dialect. He even suggests that from this point on, "le patois entre franchement en concurrence avec le français." ("Maupassant, auteur rustique", p.123).

2. See the chapter on "Caractéristiques du patois des Contes" in Anthony Butler's Les Parlers dialectaux et populaires dans l'oeuvre de Guy de Maupassant, Geneva/Paris 1962, pp.29-45.

not to allow an overuse of these dialectal expressions to confuse the reader, and assisted him further by employing them in contexts which were self-explanatory. In this way he both executed the unavoidable compromise of giving an illusion of linguistic reality rather than the reality itself, and avoided distracting interventions by the author. Subsequent proletarian writers copied extensively Maupassant's model for integrating dialect and literary style. Emile Guillaumin rewrote his Dialogues bourbonnais (1899) renouncing a phonetic reproduction of the Bourbonnais patois for an idiom closer in vocabulary and syntax to standard literary French. [1.] Eugène Le Roy made similar changes to the Perigord dialect employed in his first novel Le Moulin du Frau (1894), this altered version beimg published under the same title by Fasquelle in 1905.

In the final analysis, however, Maupassant chose to maintain a recognisable distance from his rustic subjects by confining patois to dialogue and never allowing it, as G. Sand had done, to invade the style of the narrative. It suited his purposes to allow the freedom for irony which the isolation of himself from his characters could provide. The interests of the proletarian novelists, however, lay in identifying themselves as closely as possible with their subject matter, and they worked to remove Maupassant's arbitrary barrier between the narrative voice and the fictional characters.

1. The revised edition appeared under the title Au Pays des ch'tits gas in Les Cahiers du Centre (nos. 46 and 47, November-December 1912).

It was Emile Zola who was the most significant inheritor in the nineteenth century of the mediaeval perspective on the peasant. The claim of the Polish-born critic Teodor de Wyzewa immediately following the publication of La Terre in 1887 that "/Zola/ a offert à la littérature le premier village comme il avait offert le premier ouvrier" is true on one level only.[1] F.W.J. Hemmings has already demonstrated that one of Zola's significant contributions was to help make the common man an aesthetically valid foundation for a work of art. It is true that the controversial success of La Terre succeeded in focusing national attention on the peasant as a literary subject of great potential and on the hamlet as a setting for drama rivalling anything that the great cities could produce. This cannot disguise the fact that La Terre, like Zola's other 'working class' novels, L'Assommoir (1877) and Germinal (1885), is a monument to authorial distortion. If Zola indeed presented us with the 'first village' it is doubtful whether he offered anything like the portrait of a 'real' one. Marcel Girard explained the scandal which followed the publication of La Terre by underlining the strength of the Pastorale-Bergerie tradition which had survived the realist movement's demands for objectivity only to confront Zola's pseudo-scientific roman expérimental: "Il faut bien dire que vers la fin du XIX^{e} siècle les paysans étaient en quelque sorte un sujet sacré. Les ponctifs édifiants s'étaient accumulés depuis si longtemps

1. See his article, originally written for La Revue indépendante, and reproduced in the Garnier-Flammarion edition of La Terre, Paris 1973, p.505.

sur Jacques Bonhomme et les vertus du bon peuple des campagnes qu'il était devenu sacrilège de s'attaquer à cette mythologie rassurante". [1.] The vehemence of the response provoked from men of letters, the most spectacular being the Manifeste des Cinq of 1887, is an indication of the extent to which critics as well as the reading public cherished the myth of the jolie bergère.

Leaving aside for the present an examination of the arguments for and against the exclusiveness of proletarian literature, [2.] it is difficult to deny that La Terre lacks a sense of authority. Zola did, however, accurately expose several representative traits in the peasant character which the later écrivains-paysans themselves took up. He presented not without humour the ambivalent peasant attitude toward both organised religion and the very concept of God. The exasperation of the village priest is effectively conveyed as he confronts the indifference of the villagers' faith which is motivated solely by the desire to preserve appearances. It is, however, an indifference almost benign compared

1. La Terre, Paris 1973, p.10.

2. Despite varying shades of opinion among the theorists of the movement, the essential argument centres on the arbitrary consideration of birth. Critics like Michel Ragon (see the introduction to his Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne en France, Paris 1974, especially pp.16-18) maintain an almost mystical belief in a proletarian psyche which can only be understood and expressed by those born with it. More flexible opinions, such as those of Marcel Martinet ("L'Art prolétarien", L'Effort libre, June 1913, pp.528-554) or Jean-Richard Bloch ("De l'utilité en Art et pour en finir avec l'Art pour l'Art", L'Effort libre, March 1912, pp.343-358) emphasise the supreme importance of a writer's sympathy for his subject and the sincerity of his commitment to it.

with the terrible La Grande's insult to a God who dares allow crops to be destroyed by hail: "---Sacré cochon, là-haut! Tu ne peux donc pas nous foutre la paix?" [1]. Although they avoided the use of such effects deliberately calculated to shock, a thread of cynicism bordering frequently on the anticlerical runs through the works of the peasant writers. As will be seen, this tendency is immediately apparent in the novels of Eugène Le Roy; notably in Le Moulin du Frau (1894), Jacquou le croquant (1900) and Mademoiselle de la Ralphie (1906). Zola also accurately detected the natural conservatism of the rural labourer which made him resist, among other things, any innovation in traditional farming methods: "Un paysan serait mort de faim, plutôt que de ramasser dans son champ une poignée de terre et de la porter à l'analyse d'un chimiste [...]". [2]. Emile Guillaumin was well aware of this facet of the peasant character. It was precisely the Bourbonnais peasants' resistance to change which had sabotaged his efforts to organise rural cooperatives, a defeat which the novelist made the subject of his Syndicat de Baugignoux.

His insistence on following the naturalist formula subordinated Zola's impulse for accurate documentation to the demands of his own particular impressionism. The reading public had become accustomed to his romantic distortion of detail which produced the anthropomorphic depiction of Les Halles in Le Ventre de Paris (1873), the department store in Au Bonheur des dames (1883) and the image of the omnivorous Voreux mine in Germinal. The

1. La Terre, p.133.

2. Ibid., p.161.

technique was again employed in La Terre with the image of the vast Beauce plain on which depended every aspect of the peasants' existence. To illustrate his thesis that the peasant was bound to the earth by an almost carnal desire to possess it, the author created an appropriately charged atmosphere by developing the relationship between the characters in a seemingly endless account of sexual encounters which outraged contemporary sensibilities. The subservience of the peasants, "insectes en lutte avec l'immensité du sol", [1] to the land was matched only by their subordination to physical instinct. Any sense of loyalty or cohesion is foreign to Zola's portrait of the Fouan family, and the figures of Fanny, Buteau and Jésus-Christ, in their haste to lay hold of their parents' land and savings, are reduced to caricatures of avarice and deceit. Buteau's periodic attempts to seduce his sister-in-law Françoise provide a leitmotiv in developing the theme of the peasants' animal nature, a nature which runs the gamut from sacrilege to murder. The credibility of Zola's characters is sacrificed to the dual demands of environment and heredity which form the basis of the fatalism binding all the novels of the Rougon-Macquart series. [2]

The example of Zola and La Terre raises the issue of documentation which, the cornerstone of both realist and

1. La Terre, P.45.

2. This gives the lie to the suggestion made by Christophe Campos that, after Balzac's uncompromisingly bleak treatment of his subject in Les Paysans, "for a sober portrayal we have to wait another twenty years for the arrival of Zola". ("Social Romanticism", French Literature and its Background, Vol.4, The Early Nineteenth Century, p.71).

naturalist method, posed an unavoidable problem for those middle class novelists wanting to use working class subjects. Although convincing portrayal of the lower orders is not necessarily beyond the bourgeois writer gifted with an eye for observation, it remains that such a writer is particularly vulnerable to the charge of superficiality or a more deliberate mauvaise foi.

Certainly Zola's method of gathering material about the peasants made him an easy target for criticism. Instead of the month he had originally set aside in which to visit the Beauce region and actually stay with peasant families, he spent only three days there during the first week of May 1886: "[...] Au lieu de coucher et de manger chez l'habitant, il a parcouru le pays en landau. Qu'a-t-il appris dans ces circonstances-là?" [1]. Considering the preponderance of description in the novel of the peasants' sexual activities and the drunken revelries of Jesus-Christ, one does indeed wonder what Zola could have seen during those three days. The precise details of the trip notwithstanding, Marcel Girard legitimately points out that, given the fact that final redaction of the novel started by mid-May 1886, Zola had already planned the great majority of the work before his excursion into the countryside; a trip which could only have provided the author with certain incidental detail. [2].

Ferdinand Brunetière, the sworn enemy of naturalism, ridiculed the novelist in his article in the Revue des deux mondes entitled "La Banqueroute du naturalisme". He showed himself highly sceptical of the documentation for La Terre

1. See Marcel Girard's preface to La Terre, p.18.
2. Ibid., p.17.

and accused Zola, together with Flaubert, of lacking both knowledge and that sympathy for the workers which, in his opinion, lent balance to the novels of the Russian and English naturalists. [1.] Charles-Louis Philippe, who horrified his friend Francis Jammes by dismissing out of hand the entire works of Flaubert, extended his disdain to include Zola, the Goncourts and the rest of the naturalists. The tenor of his complaint was precisely that of Brunetière's, as he criticised the superficiality of their portraits of working class life. Lacking intimate knowledge of the subject they were reduced to an exaggerated dependence on picturesque detail, those details which distorted reality because their accessibility to the most cursory observation had made them clichés. Although there is no evidence that Philippe had read any of Zola's works, Jourdain is right to credit him with some knowledge of the master naturalist. [2.] It is hardly possible that so ardent an autodidact as Philippe, who had lived in the capital from 1885 until his death in 1909, could have ignored the constant stream of articles that had been appearing in the popular press even before the open letter to L'Aurore made Zola's reputation common knowledge.

When the novels of Philippe, Guillaumin, Le Roy, Audoux and Jean are examined it will be noticed that the proletarian novelists themselves did not always avoid distortion, and

1. See La Revue des deux mondes, 1 September 1887, pp.213-224. Brunetière accused Zola of having pieced his book together from incidents drawn from "des journaux, des faits divers et des comptes rendus de cours d'assises".

2. See Francis Jourdain, Sans remords ni rancune, Paris 1953, p.45.

frequently relied too heavily on the picturesque value of the subject to lend authority to their writing. Like their middle class predecessors they encountered the problem of vraisemblance in attempting to capture working class character. When their critical perspective faltered, however, it was not because the authors lacked knowledge of their material. It was, if anything, too great an acquaintance with the hardship encountered in the worker's life which frequently upset the balance between sympathy and critical distance. This often resulted in flights of lyric sentiment, a serious flaw in Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant (1900), not sufficiently checked by realism of style to prevent the works becoming excessively retrospective and maudlin. An opposite danger was that the author's sympathy would prove too aggressive to be supported by the structure of the novel and the work would degenerate into socio-political propaganda. It is to the credit of the literary judgment of these five writers that the tendency to preach surfaced only rarely in their writing. The impulse is apparent, however, in such works as Guillaumin's Syndicat de Baugignoux and Le Roy's L'Ennemi de la mort (1912) and it will be seen to what extent this damaged their effectiveness as novels.

The concept of a fatality chaining the lower orders to an endlessly repeated cycle of material and spiritual poverty survived the death of formal naturalism and found expression in the novels of both urban and peasant proletarian writers. As will be seen, the elements of heredity and environment did not entirely disappear in the burst of literary activity which followed the discrediting of naturalism. A new momentum carried writers away from the outmoded determinism towards

a new humanism. Secular or metaphysical, it produced new modes of literary expression of varying importance --- from the Catholic revivalist movement and naturisme, through dynamisme, sincérisme to Jules Romain's unanimisme --- but did not entirely destroy the legacy of naturalism. Although P.-O. Walzer is guilty of oversimplification when he suggests that Philippe, Guillaumin, Audoux and their 'friends', "font du naturalisme sans le savoir," [1] the forces of an internal destiny, one bred into the subconscious by the effects of chronic poverty or ignorance and transmitted from parent to child, are detectable in the characters created by these authors. When the novels are examined, however, it will be shown to what extent proletarian fatalism escaped the confines of the strictly physical.

The peasantry as a social unit divorced, despite its numerical superiority, from the rest of the country by primitive modes of life and speech had largely disappeared by 1914. Improved systems of communication, transport and education had combined to bring this hitherto isolated community into contact with the new century. This social integration was marked by such outward signs as the gradual disappearance of regional dress, except for festive occasions, and a process of standardisation in peasant speech. Although regional variations in pronunciation survive to the present day, much of the richness of provincial vocabulary and idiomatic expression was being lost. The steady growth of the regionalist novel --- whose roots can be traced to the beginning of Mistral's Félibrige movement in 1854 --- during the final

1. Pierre-Olivier Walzer, Le XX^{e} siecle, p.227.

decades of the nineteenth century is directly attributable to a reaction against such conformity. [1] In their eagerness to preserve the culture of their particular areas, the regionalists entrenched themselves in the colour of local folklore and severely restricted the interest their writing could generate. Not only was it bound by natural geographical borders, which on occasion could be a matter of a few kilometres, but also its historical relevance was limited. Regionalist literature was, as its adherents intended, the chronicle of a way of life in immediate danger of disappearing.[2]

Although Alfred Cobban overstates his claim that "the status and economic conditions of the peasantry, who constituted the largest section of the French nation had risen to the point that it would not have been very exaggerated to describe France as a peasants' republic", [3] it remains true

1. Of the peasant novelists, Eugène Le Roy was the most deeply interested in the preservation of provincial dialect. The regionalist movement had considerable effect on his work and his Moulin du Frau (1884) underwent a second printing (1905) in which much Perigord patois was deleted to make the novel more commercial.

2. See Michel Ragon, Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne en France, Paris 1974, p.137: "On peut reprocher à cette littérature régionaliste un ton vieillot, gris et morne comme l'existence de vieilles filles derrière des rideaux de dentelles. On peut lui reprocher son caractère rétrograde, sa méconnaissance des besoins du monde moderne, son attachement à un artisanat périmé, à des coutumes anachroniques". See also Henri Clouard's observations on the inherent weaknesses of a literature dependent upon "[...] une époque terminée au début de ce siècle, c'est-à-dire au moment où se sont accomplis les grands changements dans les moyens de transport, de communication et d'éclairage. Et cela fait déjà de l'histoire". (Histoire de la littérature française de 1885 à 1914, Paris 1947, p.611).

3. Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France Vol.3: 1871-1962, London 1965, p.73.

that the first fifteen years of this century witnessed a substantial improvement in the economic position of the peasantry. This was directly related to the increased use of mechanised means of agricultural production throughout France. Although - adding the threat of unemployment to the existing burdens of the landless peasant in those regions where tenant farming persisted, on a national scale this technological revolution both increased the production capacity of the small independent farms and relieved the peasant of much of the heavy labour of earlier days.

One can argue that the steady improvement in the peasant's physical environment gradually altered his mentality and assisted in his integration into the national community. The one truly peasant art form, the oral tradition of folklore, was quickly dying out as a direct result of the disappearance of the veillée, a social gathering made superfluous by progress in lighting and heating methods. Protectionist agricultural policies, however, in favour as early as 1881 and consolidated by Méline's tariff law in 1892, erected an artificial barrier around the peasantry which insured its physical survival as a class for the next sixty years.[1] What they could not protect was the essence of country life; the variety of linguistic and social traditions which for centuries had isolated the peasant community. Readily accepting physical comforts the modern industrial world had to offer, the peasant was also embracing, if unwittingly, urban cultural values.[2]

1. See Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945, Vol.1, Oxford 1973, pp.174-175.

2. Henri Sée, a contemporary of this development,

If the general direction of this interpretation is accepted then the proletarian literature developed in the French countryside between 1890 and 1914 acquires a further significance. A response to the historical and literary developments which had produced an urban proletarian literature, the growth of the peasant novel also represented both the initial flight of the peasant literary imagaination and its 'swan song' as the testament to a way of life on the verge of extinction.

observed that "Il est certain que la vie rurale a perdu de son originalité, car elle tend à se modeler sur celle des villes". (See Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.252.) In his article on "La Terre délaissée" (La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 October 1910) Emile Guillaumin identified the destructive effect that modern industrial society had had on a traditional peasant family structure which had survived intact to the middle of the nineteenth century: "La période de prospérité agricole, la circulation plus intense de l'argent firent pénétrer dans la masse un commencement de bien-être et développèrent le goût du luxe, le besoin de paraître. En même temps la diffusion des moyens de communication, le service obligatoire élargissaient le cercle de l'individu. L'industrie offrant de forts salaires ouvrait des horizons nouveaux. On n'était plus fatalement muré à jamais dans sa profession". (p.215).

Development of the urban wage earner in the nineteenth century.

By the end of the nineteenth century France had undergone a social transformation which altered her character more fundamentally than anything over the past centuries of her history. To keep the country's position in perspective, it must be remembered that the economy of France developed more slowly than that of her increasingly industrialised neighbours England and Germany, and that by 1914 half the population was still employed in agriculture. [1.] Over the century, however, the country had committed itself to an industrialisation whose growing pains confronted the French with a challenge to traditional approaches to economic and political systems. Attitudes to literature did not remain exempt.

As long as towns and cities had existed in France there had always been, quite separate from the bourgeois whom they served, the classes inférieures. Those not in residence with their masters created their own ghettos where they lived and worked. These were the haunts of the blanchisseuses, repasseuses and porteurs d'eau who, with the figures of their other fellow workers, had made their way occasionally --- although usually as picturesque background detail --- into the literature of pre-nineteenth century France. Many were fresh arrivals from the provinces and all had the ambition to amass as quickly as possible

1. See Douglas Johnson, "French History and Society since 1789", France: A Companion to French Studies (D.G. Charlton, ed.), London 1972, p.174.

their petit magot, make good their debts and pass into the relatively secure if humble ranks of the petty bourgeoisie. Whether in the countryside, the small towns or the expanding cities, this determination to abandon a purely contingent existence for some measure of financial security --- to exchange, using Péguy's distinction, their misère for pauvreté --- remained the principal motivation of the great majority of the working class.

The nineteenth century added new dimensions to an age old labouring class who had traditionally provided the essential services. Industrialisation stimulated the growth of the urban areas and created the increasingly important social stratum of the factory worker. It expanded the number of those who, like the construction workers, were directly involved with the boom in the cities, and swelled the ranks of the established métiers which in countless ways were affected by urbanisation. More than ever before Paris was the centre of national life. To its status as an artistic and political capital was added the prestige of being the focal point for a steadily expanding economy. The growth of commerce brought with it yet another category of urban workers, the employé de bureau whose strength was increased by huge numbers of government fonctionnaires. To a great extent these were a creation of the ever expanding bureaucracy made necessary by administrative problems provoked by industrialisation and the rise in urban population. By 1848 France was known to have the greatest number of civil service positions in Europe and between 1848 and 1914 they increased from 250,000 to about half a million. [1] As the nineteenth

1. Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945, Vol.I, p.114.

century progressed the initial prestige enjoyed by civil servants suffered steady erosion --- a process that continued well into the new century --- and by 1900 the average salary of this "new proletariat" was barely equal to that of a labourer. [1.]

The Industrial Revolution created new classes of workers essential to its implementation. It is a statement of the obvious to maintain that the peasantry had existed as long as man had been compelled to till the soil for his food. Any attempt, however, to specify the date of birth of the industrial proletariat, although of much more recent date, is more difficult.

Despite the benefit of technology pioneered by the English and the Germans, the development of the Industrial Revolution in France was a relatively slow one and did not, as A.J. George contends, cross the Channel in the wake of Wellington. [2.] Although historians differ in attempting to chart its progress, a general consensus may be distinguished. At the time of the Revolution, the peuple consisted mostly of peasants and artisans, and factory workers were few. On the eve of the Restoration, what heavy industry there was consisted mainly in the iron works of Lorraine while large scale enterprises were mostly limited to the traditional manufacture of textiles in Normandy and the Nord together with the established silk weaving industry in Lyons. Although by 1830 the first effects of the coming industrial

1. Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945 Vol.I, p.122.

2. Albert Joseph George, The Development of French Romanticism: The Impact of the Industrial Revolution on Literature, Syracuse University Press, 1955, p.189.

age were already being felt, it was towards the end of the July Monarchy that the widespread application of technological inventions and the ready supply of cheap labour made available by a population boom marked the beginning of the Industrial Revolution as a significant force for change in French society. Although the subsequent growth rate of the industrial work force is impossible to determine precisely, it appears that the approximate increase was from 2,700,000 during the Second Empire to 3 million in 1876, reaching 3,300,000 by 1891. [1.] Such figures, although reflecting the marked increase in industrial activity within France, cannot compare with the growth rate recorded in England and Germany. [2.]

In contrast to the tendency in the latter half of the century, the years 1800-1850 witnessed a rapid growth in the country's population. In 1830 the total stood at 32,500,000, the number having increased by one million between 1820 and 1825. The twenty years after 1830 saw a further increase of 3 millions. [3.] In Paris itself the population nearly doubled between 1800 and 1850, reaching 1,053,000 in 1851. [4.] In both the capital and the provincial towns inadequate housing created increasing difficulty, and in the countryside, too, overpopulation became a real problem,

1. From a mere 15% of the total population in 1830, the urban dweller accounted for just over a quarter of all Frenchmen by 1846.

2. See Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945 Vol.1,pp.209-210.

3. See Christophe Campos, "Social Romanticism", French Literature and its Background Vol.4 The Early Nineteenth Century, p.61.

4. See Jean Vidalenc, La Société française de 1815 à 1848 Vol.II Le Peuple des villes et des bourgs, Paris 1973, p.70.

especially in the métayage regions where there were not enough tenancies to go round. In his Tour de France, Richard Cobb suggests that during the period 1789-1848 there was very little change in the actual ratio between urban and rural dwellers and, if anything, the balance tilted in favour of the countryside. [1.]

That a significant shift to the larger towns and cities did begin to take place around 1848 indicates that industrialisation had developed sufficiently to act as a magnet attracting the peasant youth in search of secure employment. [2.] After 1848 this drift continued at a rate of approximately 3% per decade despite the fact that the total number of Frenchmen remained virtually static until the First War. [3.] The result was that, as the century progressed, the trend towards rural overpopulation was not only arrested but reversed, and the exodus to the cities caused a concern in government circles which was

1. See Richard Cobb, Tour de France, London 1976, p.108.

2. Campos indicates that by 1851 one fifth of the French populace lived in towns of more than 5,000 inhabitants, whereas twenty years earlier the proportion had been one in six. (See "Social Romanticism", p.61.) For discussion of the emigration to Paris and the provincial towns during the years immediately preceding 1848, see Jean Vidalenc, La Société française de 1815 à 1848 Vol.II Le Peuple des villes et des bourgs, pp.62-66; 70-71; 74-77.

3. See S.B. John and H.R. Kedward, "Literature and Ideology: 1880-1914", French Literature and its Background Vol.5 The Late Nineteenth Century, John Cruickshank (ed.), London 1969, p.174. Between 1870 and 1914 the population had only increased from 36 millions to less than 40 millions. (See Douglas Johnson, "French History and Society since 1789", France: A Companion to French Studies, D.G. Charlton (ed.), p.174.).

taken up by writers from every background; and notably in proletarian ranks, by Emile Guillaumin and Eugène Le Roy. [1]

The reign of Louis Philippe marked the birth of a new social and economic class, la grande bourgeoisie manufacturière. The Orleanist monarchy witnessed the beginnings in France of modern industrial capitalism and its rapid development, as more and more technological innovations --- many of which, like the steam engine, had been in existence for decades --- were applied to industry. From the Second Republic onward the industrialists consolidated their control over national economic policy and a process of centralisation of industry in the towns proceeded unabated. In order to facilitate the running of the machines, the labourers were increasingly concentrated in large establishments which housed the new mechanised means of production, and the system of ateliers around which small groups of artisans traditionally had been organised gave way to the less personal atmosphere of the factory. The monotonous nature of factory labour itself and a sense of dépaysement aggravated by an ever increasing population and the consequent housing shortage began the process of dehumanisation of the work force which prepared the way later for the worst illustrations of that social injustice which always lay just below the glittering surface

1. In his essay "French History and Society since 1789" Douglas Johnson ignores this social dislocation caused by the movement of the population within France. His evaluation that the country escaped the dramatic social and economic upheavals experienced in England and Germany --- primarily, it must be said because her economy developed less rapidly --- is a fair one. By disregarding the shift in the balance of urban and rural communities Professor Johnson does, however, attach too much importance to the relatively constant population figure as an indication of the stability of the nation itself.

of the Belle Epoque. No longer could the worker rely on the support of a homogeneous community of his fellow; a support, as Richard Cobb observes in his study of working class life in Revolutionary Lyons, based on "[...] the solidarity of workmates, of those who follow a similar trade, a moral solidarity, based on friendship and mutual preservation, rather than an embryonic trade union [...]" [1].

The individual skills of the workers became less highly prized than the machines they operated, and the expansion of the nation's economy was won at the cost of the labourers' independence. It must be remembered that this growing urban working class had to wait until 1884 for the legalisation of trade unions and until 1895 for the formation of the C.G.T. In the interim they were quite unprotected and their wages depended on the elementary principle of supply and demand. Industrial expansion continued, attaining its height during the latter part of the Second Empire and the Third Republic. [2]. The relentless influx of labour to industrial centres however kept the earnings of the average workers to a minimum. The incident which Zola elaborated in Germinal in which the mine owners arbitrarily decreased the pittance paid to their workers was unfortunately not

1. Richard Cobb, A Sense of Place, London 1975, p.105.

2. In their essay on "Literature and Ideology: 1880-1914, John and Kedward identify a second "minor industrial revolution" in the decade 1892-1902. The practical application of power to industry increased by 400% over that period and enabled France to become more competitive in foreign markets. (French Literature and its Background Vol.5: The Late Nineteenth Century, p.174.).

a product of pure literary imagination.

The number of workers employed in the building industry in Paris had reached 40,000 by 1847, while the average wage earned by a construction labourer under the July Monarchy remained about 1fr.78 for a thirteen hour day. [1.] Although it is clearly impossible to treat wage earners as a homogeneous group, this was indicative of a general level of payment the great majority of employers felt under no obligation to increase until the creation of some sort of organised labour movement could bring pressure to bear. Although the number of its adherents grew steadily, the effectiveness of C.G.T. in the pre-War period is open to considerable question. [2.] It is difficult to agree with André Maurois' assertion that the organisation was "powerful" and that during the years 1906-1914 it had waged an effective opposition to Clemenceau. [3.] How could the C.G.T. have been effective when in 1910 its total annual revenue was a mere

1. See the foreword by Georges Duveau to Martin Nadaud's Mémoires de Léonard, ancien garçon maçon (Paris 1948), a mediocre autobiographical novel about a worker's life under the July Monarchy. The current rate for apprentice bricklayers was 1fr.80 per day, while the more skilled limousants and master bricklayers could earn as much as 3frs. and 3fr.50 respectively. Duveau mentions that construction workers in general during the same period would earn about half the upper rate of 3fr. 50.

2. From a membership of 715,000 in 1904 the ranks of C.G.T. reached the 1,000,000 mark by 1909. (See Alfred Cobban, A History of Modern France (1871-1962), p.69).

3. André Maurois, A History of France, London 1949, p.466.

20,000 francs (£800) and by 1914 it could claim only 9% of the French work force? [1] Although it did manage to have the working day shortened to ten hours, the French labour movement did not win the major battle for les trois huit --- eight hours of work, eight hours of free time, eight hours of sleep --- until 1919. It was still too weak to afford its members anything like a fair share in the wealth of the country which had been accumulating since the defeat of 1870 and it seems reasonable to agree with Charles Seignobos' assessment that the C.G.T. "merely marked time up to the war". [2]

If tangible evidence of trade union progress was limited, the latter half of the nineteenth century saw a marked improvement in educational opportunities for the urban workers. Concurrent with social and technological developments creating a new urban working class was a series of attempts over the century to provide for the instruction of the labourers. As early as 1820 and 1821 the first two courses in primary adult education were established in Paris and by 1830, under the guidance of Louis-Philippe's Education Minister Guizot, adult education became government policy. A census taken in 1827 among army conscripts revealed

1. See Douglas Johnson, "French History and Society since 1789", p.176. Johnson compares this figure to the 28% of workers belonging to the corresponding federation in Germany at the time. Although the rural sector was not unrepresented, the number of agricultural workers affiliated with the C.G.T. had reached only 9,320 by 1910. (Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945, Vol.I, Oxford Clarendon Press 1973, p.252).

2. Charles Seignobos, A History of the French People, London 1939, p.371.

that 57% of working class males could neither read nor write. The literacy rate rose sufficiently under the July Monarchy to make feasible the publication of 1840 of L'Atelier and La Ruche populaire, the first proletarian newspapers edited entirely by and for the workers. [1] By the end of Louis-Philippe's regime the number of adult males able to read had risen by 52%. [2]

The number of courses available to adults rose steadily as the century progressed and during the later, liberal years of the Second Empire the growth rate was striking. In 1865 there existed 7,844 of these classes throughout France involving some 200,000 workers. By 1869 this number had risen to 33,638 with an attendance just short of 800,000. [3] The subjects offered ranged from basic and practical studies of reading, spelling, bookkeeping and surveying to include applied mathematics, geography, and a selection of cultural disciplines such as history, music and literature.

The final years of the century saw a more direct involvement by well intentioned members of the bourgeoisie with the education of the people. Inspired by the ideas of the typographer Georges Deherme, the Société des Universités populaires was established on 12th March 1898. It was the

1. Other workers' newspapers of the period included Travail, published in Lyon between June and September 1841, L'Humanitaire (July 1841), Fraternité (May 1841-March 1843) and a second series of Fraternité which lasted from January 1845 to February 1848.

2. See Benigno Cacérès, Histoire de l'éducation populaire, Paris 1964, pp.19-20.

3. Ibid., pp.32-33.

attempt by such men as Anatole France, Paul Desjardins and André Gide's uncle, Charles Gide, to bring culture to the masses by forming a liaison between intellectuals and workers. The movement was motivated by an altruistic and surprisingly leftist aim to awaken in the workers a sense of unity and pride in their class. The second bulletin of the society declared that "Notre avenir [...] c'est de travailler à rendre le peuple conscient; le jour où les hommes seront conscients, la question sociale sera résolue, et c'est la tâche des Universités populaires de rendre le peuple conscient". [1.] A network of informal universities was established wherever suitable quarters could be found. Courses of evening instruction were drawn up and small libraries made available to the labourers who by their long working hours were usually prevented from using municipal collections. The organisation functioned well for a time and by 1902 there were 143 of these universities throughout the country, 47 of them situated in Paris. That enthusiasm among both teachers and taught declined rapidly is not perhaps surprising. These universities, equipped with makeshift facilities, relied heavily for their evening students on people who had already put in a long working day, very often under trying conditions. It would be the exceptional worker,

1. In his Essais sur le mouvement ouvrier en France, Daniel Halévy, while upholding the workers' right to education, regretted the doctrinaire approach to many disciplines, especially history and philosophy, adopted by the U.P.'s. He was under no illusions about the potentially disruptive influence that these 'universities' could wield: "Il existe une masse ouvrière qui [...] travaille uniquement à développer sa force collective [...] et sa conscience, aussitôt éveillée, est une force révolutionnaire". (Paris 1901, p.191.).

indeed, who was willing regularly to sacrifice his few hours of rest to study. Although the experiment lasted only a few years, it succeeded in breaching the class barrier insofar as it provided those workers who sought it with an introduction to an advanced intellectual training previously reserved for the bourgeoisie and the nobility. The example was a salutary one, both for those who directly benefitted and for a future generation of workers whose improved social circumstances would make full time university study an attainable goal.

Simultaneous with the development of the universités populaires, social Catholicism, harnessed by the Sillon movement, was attempting to bridge the same gulf between worker and intellectual. Founded in 1894 at the Collège Stanislaus by a group of middle class students and centred around Marc Sangnier, its aims were more blatantly political than the highminded idealism behind the universités. Reform of the existing social order was advocated, and implicit in the determination to suppress arbitrary distinctions between master and student inside the organisation itself was the intention to erode similar discrepancies within the wider framework of society. The movement grew steadily between 1898 and 1910 and centres d'études were set up throughout the provinces as well as the capital. The increasingly leftward drift of sillonisme, crowned by Sangnier's active encouragement of its adherents to join the C.G.T., alarmed the Church Hierarchy and led Pius X to denounce it in 1910. Loyalty to Rome outweighing their humanitarian commitment, the sillonistes disbanded. The movement, however, had made its contribution to integrating both the urban and rural proletariat into the intellectual life of the nation. It

had also helped to provide a new generation of labourers with the tools of literacy and critical judgment with which to call into question the subordinate position of the proletariat within the prevailing social system. Educating a class to recognise the injustice of its inferior status while failing to make any significant social or economic reforms was a potentially disastrous policy. That class tension never reached the exploding point may be explained by the reconciling effect of the Great War which provided a common, and external, enemy. It remains true, however, that during the two decades before 1914 the proletarian attained a sufficient level of intellectual and literary sophistication and disillusionment with bourgeois culture to prompt them to look to their own ranks for solutions to working class problems. The development of this class cohesiveness naturally encouraged the emergence of a new generation of worker writers who sought their inspiration among the peuple.

Until the end of the nineteenth century the figure of the urban worker in French literature, like that of the peasant, had made only intermittent appearances and had been almost without exception a product of the bourgeois imagination. The gradual but perceptible rise in literacy initially stimulated by the Guizot laws of 1833 was accelerated by the education reforms of 1879, 1882 and 1886. [1] A mass

1. Although Professor Johnson emphasises that the earlier Guizot provisions were far from universally effective, he does concede that "it was theoretically possible for the children of the indigent poor to go to school without paying..." ("French History and Society since 1789", France: A Companion to French Studies, D.G. Charlton ed., p.157.).

market for popular literature was developing and new periodical publications persisted in springing up to fill the need, despite savage press censorship under both Louis-Philippe and Napoleon III.

The modern newspaper with the romans-feuilletons and other popular attractions it featured was the successor --- and a much more effective and widespread one --- to the littérature de colportage which for centuries had catered to what literary needs the people possessed. [1.] The founding of La Presse and Le Siècle in 1836 during the early and more liberal years of the Citizen-King's regime was a milestone in the history of the modern press. The financing of these publications being partially assured by the innovation of selling advertising space, the newspapers were beginning to be sold in individual copies at a reduced rate as well as by large, and expensive, subscription. One of the important achievements of the Second Republic was to revive the movement toward cheap newspapers by relieving publishers of the costly legal obligation to produce caution money. Technological improvements in printing and in the production of paper which had been developed over the first three decades of the century made it now possible to distribute newspapers more cheaply and to a much wider public. [2.] With

1. "Le fait que, du XVII^{e} siècle au milieu du XIX^{e} siècle, le peuple soit illettré et que la littérature de colportage rencontre un aussi vaste public fait supposer que beaucoup de gens du peuple achetaient des almanachs sans savoir lire et se faisaient lire „leur„ livre par ceux qui savaient". (Michel Ragon, Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne en France, p.38.).

2. The first cylindrical press for newspapers was introduced in France in 1834. For a summary of other major innovations made during this period see A.J. George, The Development of French Romanticism, pp.19;21.

the temporary lifting of press censorship after the 1848 revolution single copy sales grew rapidly and the price of one sou brought the daily editions within the reach of all but the most destitute. The development of larger and faster presses together with more efficient methods of producing paper continued under the Second Empire and Third Republic. When, in the later liberal years of Napoleon III, the French press was virtually assured its freedom of expression it firmly established itself as an integral part of the daily life of every political and social section of French society.

As far as the proletariat was concerned the full effect of this combination of freedom of the press and the revolution in printing technology was not felt until after 1890. After that time writers could not ignore a substantial new addition to the reading public, a first generation of the people affected by Ferry's education reforms. More articulate than his predecessors, the French worker towards the end of the nineteenth century was for the first time in a position to support his fellows trying to break the bourgeois monopoly on literature. The newspaper recommended itself as the most expedient means by which a worker could make his name known to the general public while avoiding paying the frais d'auteur often necessary to launch the works of unknown writers.

The development of inexpensive printing methods had also been extended to book publishing and there were editors willing to risk an edition sufficiently cheap for the worker to be able to purchase it and for the publisher to absorb any financial loss in the event of failure. The

possibility of mutual support between working class authors and a reading public composed from the same class was a stimulus to the growth of the proletarian novel. Because of the low level of general education such support had been impossible for an earlier generation of proletarian poets in fashion with the bourgeois public in the 1830's. Although sponsored by some of the greatest of the romantic authors convinced of the inexorable progress of man and the benefits of the Industrial Revolution, this working class movement in poetry died as soon as middle class literary fashion changed. [1] At a time when even deciphering elementary prose created problems for the average worker, developing a taste for poetry was clearly out of the question. The existence of a more sophisticated proletarian public in the final years of the century released writers from an exclusive dependence for their livelihood on middle class patronage. They could more freely exploit familiar background and characters without feeling under a continual obligation to explain or apologise for the material used. Although

1. Among the notables who took part in what became the fashionable gesture of sponsoring proletarian poets were Hugo (Savinien Lapointe), Lamennais, Vigny and George Sand (Charles Poncy), Lamartine (Jean Reboul, Reine Garde, Antoinette Quarre, Hégésippe Moreau), Dumas (Jean Reboul) and Baudelaire (Pierre Dupont). Not all critics were kindly disposed towards this identification of some of the best known names in contemporary literature with working class authors. Eugène Lerminier, writing in the staunchly conservative Revue des deux mondes, predictably regretted what he saw as the unmerited publicity given the proletarian writers and "[...] les adulations que leur adressent plusieurs personnes en se disant les organes de la démocratie. Elles traitent le peuple comme les courtisans traitent les rois; tout ce qu'écrit le peuple est beau, sa prose est forte, sa poésie sublime". ("La Littérature des ouvriers", December 1841, p.965.).

publishing houses remained in the grip of the bourgeoisie, and by far the greatest part of the novel consuming public continued to be middle class, one cannot discount the psychological fillip for the proletarian writer who knew that there was a large public upon whose sympathy he could count.

In attempting to write convincingly about their own class the urban proletarian novelists who made their appearance at the end of the nineteenth century confronted the same problems of perspective as did their bourgeois counterparts over the preceding decades. Given the natural bond of sympathy that attached these writers to their subject matter, the major novelistic conventions of the age --- romanticism, realism and naturalism --- placed particularly enticing temptations in their path. To rally to the defence of their class by concentrating on creating types and exposing individual sagas of injustice and hardship was to leave the door open to mawkish sentimentalism and narrative based on thinly clad personal experience. On the other hand, to attempt a comprehensive portrayal of the _grisaille_ of working class life was simply an invitation to beat the realists and their naturalist successors at their own game. No matter how incisive the powers of observation of middle class novelists, their proletarian counterparts, by virtue of prolonged first hand experience, could be expected to have the advantage in rendering any factual _reportage_ of the minutiae of working class life or in magnifying any of its sordid aspects.

Quite apart from the sociological interest it may hold, the real test for the urban proletarian involvement in

literature, as for that of the peasant writer, was the achievement of balance between a subjective, and totally contingent, sympathy and objective fact. The literary merit of the movement must be judged on its success in selectively ordering primary documentation to create a competent literary structure to convey the writer's attitude to the plight of his class. Closer study of the novelists included in this thesis will attempt to determine to what extent they resisted the temptation provided by their unique insight into a hitherto little known environment to isolate their work from the mainstream of modern French literature.

Fictional representation of the urban worker.

Given the marked development of commercial technology and the new social questions it raised, it is not surprising that the urban and industrial proletariat should begin to make its appearance in the works of the nineteenth century novelists. To the extent that no writer can completely isolate himself from his social context, the latest development was so much grist to the literary mill and destined to occupy some place in contemporary novels.

The dawn of the industrial age in France coincided with the heyday of romanticism in art, and the writers of this tradition were not long in recognising the potential in the figure of the urban poor. They shared with the pastoral writers like Rousseau and Sand the impulse to champion the innocent, equating simplicity with purity, while seeing in the urban agglomerations both the result of and a stimulus to man's tendency to pervert the natural laws. From Le Paysan perverti (1775) and La Paysanne pervertie (1776), novels by the pre-romantic Rétif de la Bretonne describing the pernicious influence of Paris on two provincials freshly arrived in the capital, through such works as Hugo's Les Misérables (1862), Musset's Mimi Pinsot (1843) and Eugène Sue's Mystères de Paris (1842-43) runs the constant theme of the oppression of the poor by the 'ville écrasante'.

Although tendency to dramatic conflict in plot structure and the florid description and evocation of Nature which broadly characterised romantic writing distanced this era from the 'social' literature which emerged at the end of the century, certain areas of influence can be discerned.

Hugo's major prose statement of social concern, Les Misérables, was not published until 1862. He had started work on it, however, nearly twenty years earlier in 1845, and that after a previous two decades of planning and collecting material for the novel. As in all his work Hugo showed himself to be in the most fundamental sense a product of the literary atmosphere of the first half of the century. Nowhere in contemporary literature did an author's personality, his sympathies and revulsions, have a more direct connection with literary expression. Idealism was translated into larger than life characters and contrived plot structures in which coincidence often played too important a role. Such manipulation is certainly not absent from Les Misérables where Valjean's 'chance' encounters with Javert, for example, demand of the reader a considerable degree of credulity.

Although Hugo abandoned the exotic lushness of setting favoured by early romantics - Chateaubriand in René (1801) and Atala (1802), and precursors like Bernardin de Saint-pierre in Paul et Virginie (1787) - he transposed the heroic scale of presentation to the more prosaic environment of Paris. The result was the portrayal of a setting which, although almost immediately recognisable by the reader, was distorted by a wilful elaboration of detail. The famous description of the Paris sewers through which Valjean drags Marius is but one example of the ordinary attaining the level of the epic through the author's powers of observation heightened almost to the point of impressionism.

From the beginning of his career Hugo had filled note-books with descriptive details of "choses vues" in which his

literary technique was rooted and which account for the base of concrete realism in the works which no amount of authorial intervention succeeded in dispelling. This was an intimate part of his poetic vision as well and added poignancy through verisimilitude to the 'social' poems in Les Contemplations and the more overtly political Châtiments. His "Chose vue un jour de printemps", dated 1840, is typical of his concern for the poor and isolates hunger as the foundation on which all the suffering of the destitute is built: "La faim, c'est le regard de la prostituée, /C'est le bâton ferré du bandit, c'est la main/Du pâle enfant volant un pain sur le chemin,/ /.../ Oh! la faim, c'est le crime public." [1].

It is precisely here that Hugo anticipated the imperative for documentation upon which the realists and naturalists based their art and which was an inescapable element in the social realism of the proletarian authors. Where Hugo approached more closely Charles-Louis Philippe and Emile Guillaumin than he did Flaubert or Zola was in the philosophical base to his literary superstructure. Documentation completed not by the positivist credo of the post-1850 years but by a humanism similar to that which developed in the wake of the naturalists, unites Hugo with the worker-writers of the turn of this century and permits him to be considered the first major novelist to tackle the subject of the urban poor. [2]. In this, while

1. Les Contemplations, Nelson (ed.), Paris 1934, p.171.
2. See Marcel Martinet's evaluation of Hugo in his article "L'Art prolétarien". While dismissing Zola as too impersonal, "trop souvent égaré par son néfaste préjugé scientiste", he admires Hugo's affinity with the people. "Et lui-même, maître en la littérature bourgeoise, /.../

prefiguring later working class novelists, he also distinguished himself from Balzac, in whose work is discernible a similar blend of romantic and realist elements, but who declined to seek his subjects any lower down the social ladder than the petite bourgeoisie. As early as 1829 in his Dernier jour d'un condamné Hugo displayed his interest in the misérables, the unemployed and the criminal, utilising notes he had made on prison life to identify his work with a specific social thesis; namely, the necessity for abolishing the death penalty. In this curiosity, too, which he exhibited for the criminal underworld Hugo anticipated the interest in la pègre which French novelists later in the century cultivated under the influence of Dostoievsky and which, encouraged further by Nietzsche, played an essential role in the work of Charles-Louis Philippe. In La Crise de l'humanisme Micheline Tison-Braun miscalculated by sixty years when she maintained that the "romantisme des bas-fonds parisiens" entered French literature only "dans le sillage du naturalisme". [1].

While conforming to a general egocentric tendency amongst romantics to create highly individual types towards or against which the reader's sympathy might easily be directed, it is unjust to consider Hugo's characters as having little significance outside the particular novel that sustains them. He managed to combine the 'centripetal'

plusieurs fois dans son oeuvre il a été vraiment écrivain du peuple; par un aspect de son prodigieux génie d'intuition, il est un de nos plus grands précurseurs". (L'Effort libre, June 1913, p.537.).

1. Micheline Tison-Braun, La Crise de l'humanisme, vol.1, 1890-1914, Paris 1958, p.17.

attraction of highly individualised heroes with a sense of their symbolic value in a wider social context. Within Les Misérables itself the depth to which Hugo develops the characters of Gavroche, the Thenardiers and Fantine and the details which comprise their daily lives reflects both a personal sympathy on the part of the author for the urban poor in general and an understanding in particular of the plight of provincial immigrants to Paris in the 1830's. Although Hugo's novel seems almost apolitical compared to those of later, more exclusively committed, writers exposition of a social problem must to an extent imply support for social change. A work like Les Misérables was not, as Christophe Campos would have it, a cri du coeur for an individual or a selected number of individuals who suffered social injustice, but a more comprehensive overture for reform. [1] The symbolic significance of the novel assumed increasing importance to Hugo himself during the years he worked on it and "/.../ le roman de quelques misérables /devint/", to use M.-F. Guyard's words, "une illustration et une explication de la misère". [2]

Although of lesser importance as serious literature than Hugo's work, the writings of Eugène Sue did more than anything else to popularise the figure of the urban poor in French literature. When his best known work, Les Mystères de Paris (1842-43) was published serially members of every sector of the public fought over copies of the newspaper as they appeared on the streets. It presented the reader with a

1. See Christophe Campos, "Social Romanticism", French Literature and its Background, Vol.4 The Early Nineteenth Century, John Cruickshank (ed.), p.72.

2. Introduction to Les Misérables, Garnier, Paris 1963, vol.1, p.xiv.

portrait of the capital's underworld teeming with crime and every vice while at the same time supporting pathetically innocent creatures, like La Goualeuse, whose qualities were magnified by the very elements which conspired against them. Sue, the feuilletoniste par excellence, achieved a lucrative balance between romantic individualism in creating prototypes requiring an emotional response from the reader and realist observation of detail to provide that credible arena of action necessary to capture the public imagination. Throughout this long work Sue introduced echoes of demands for social and political reform which were becoming more pressing during the final years of the July Monarchy. He was careful to disguise any overt personal criticisms of the regime and avoided polemic which risked alienating the middle class segment of his reading public and which certainly would have brought him into conflict with Louis-Philippe's censors.

In a final novel, Les Mystères du peuple (1849-1857), an ambitious study of the history of a proletarian family from 57 B.C. to the Second Republic, he was not so prudent. Sue's political and didactic intentions for this novel were signalled by an epigraph, appearing at the head of each volume, guaranteed to antagonise the Imperial authorities: "Il n'est pas une réforme sociale, politique ou religieuse que nos pères n'aient été forcés de conquérir de siècle en siècle, au prix de leur sang par L'INSURRECTION". Five volumes of the work saw the light of day but after the 1851 coup d'état Sue found himself imprisoned and then exiled to Switzerland where he finished the novel. Upon its completion, and just after the author's death, the French government ordered it suppressed. [1]

1. For a discussion of how Sue, after Les Mystères de

With Hugo, Sue shared an interest in criminality which was directly related to the problem of chronic urban poverty. Le dernier jour d'un condamné and Les Misérables betrayed a genuine social concern on the part of their author. Les Mystères de Paris, on the other hand showed that Sue's aim throughout most of his career was principally to entertain, to intrigue, to épater les bourgeois. Les Mystères de Paris invited criticism, which sixty years later was directed at the proletarian writers, that the novelist was exploiting the picturesque elements of the milieu to sell his books. These charges were certainly justified in the case of Les Mystères where the highly episodic account of the adventure of the enigmatic Rodolphe, a princely 'avenging angel' who roamed the streets punishing evil and rewarding good, pushed the work to the brink of simple fantasy. Even Sue's selection of realistic detail to be elaborated was itself put to the service of establishing a clandestine, 'forbidden' atmosphere guaranteed to thrill the reader. In the opening pages the description of Le Lapin blanc, with its dank smoke-filled bar and quintessentially shady clientele, established the dominant tone for the rest of the work.

Sue also takes advantage of the picturesque value of Parisian argot, the urban counterpart to provincial dialect. Throughout the first few pages of Mystères he is at pains to add colour to his description by employing a quantity of local slang he acquired while wandering the streets in

Paris, increasingly sacrificed his literary art to political propaganda, see the article by René Guise, Marcel Graner and Liliane Durand-Dessert, "Des Mystères de Paris aux Mystères du peuple", Europe, N° 575-576, March-April 1977, pp.152-167.

search of material. He did not in any way attempt to resolve the stylistic problem of integrating the expressions into a coherent pattern --- as George Sand had seriously, if unsuccessfully, tried to do --- but was content to footnote translations of the terms used. He quickly lost interest in even this concession to linguistic realism and the reader encounters the following note within the first few pages of the work: "Nous n'abuserons pas longtemps de cet affreux langage d'argot, nous en donnerons seulement quelques spécimens caractéristiques". [1] As the novel progressed Sue accordingly curtailed his use of Parisian street slang.

Before leaving the romantics altogether, brief mention should be made of two works representative of the age and which illustrated a more naive attitude towards the urban poor; an attitude in sharp contrast with the direction that subsequent nineteenth century literature on the subject would take. Both Henri Murger's Scènes de la vie de Bohème (1851) and Musset's Mimi Pinsot (1843) represent a highly sentimental view of urban poverty which glorified the strength of human character attainable in deprivation while largely failing to consider an honest portrayal of that deprivation. Scènes de la vie de Bohème, while post-romantic in its emphasis on descriptive reality, takes as its base the impoverished existence of students and their grisettes in the Latin Quarter and postulates a sense of cohesiveness, a communal bonhomie amongst all reaches of the Parisian indigent. It will be apparent at a later

1. Eugène Sue, Les Mystères de Paris, Charpentier, Paris, no date, p.2n.

point how this idealistic concept of solidarity is absent from most of the works of the proletarian novelists examined by this thesis.

It is a theme which Musset enshrined in his Mimi Pinsot where he pushed to the point of melodrama his reflections on working class character. In order to help her sick and starving friend Rougette, Mimi, a destitute lingère pawns her only dress and is obliged to attend Mass wearing only her petticoat and wrapped in an old curtain. When Eugène, a bourgeois medical student criticises the girl for squandering any money she does manage to save, he is rebuked by a friend in terms which confirm Musset's tendency to wax sentimental about the poor. "[...] Elle a engagé sa robe pour quatre francs, elle s'est fait un châle avec un rideau; et qui dit ce qu'il sait, qui donne ce qu'il a, qui fait ce qu'il peut, n'est pas obligé à davantage". [1] If such portrayals of working class existence had little contact with a more sordid reality they did form a readily identifiable part of the romantic tradition and gave the reading public a picture of the urban poor that was easy to accept. It was left to the writers of the latter half of the century to modify and consolidate this initial achievement and give the humble city dweller his undisputed position in French literature.

When it came, the reaction against romanticism could not have been better suited to the development of the proletarian subject in the novel. By nature opposed to

1. "Mimi Pinsot", Contes, Paris 1854, p.270.

romantic exoticism and its creation of superlative types, the new movement had its roots in positivism. Interested in portraying the social fact as it could be observed, this new generation was naturally attracted to the wealth of raw material thrown up by the evils of urbanisation and other effects of the Industrial Revolution which had taken firm hold by mid-century. The range of the author's vision narrowed and the panoramic scope of the romantics' observation --- one that led too easily to the formation of myths[1]. --- was abandoned in favour of concise studies in physical reality and the psychological composition of individual characters. As early as 1845 one of the movement's leaders Jules Champfleury in his nouvelle about the impoverished engraver Chien-Caillou, was taking the first steps towards debunking the romantic myth of the noble poverty. Not until twelve years later did he publish a treatise on Le Réalisme which he followed with his De la littérature populaire in 1861. This latter work revealed that, if he suspected the grandiose style of the romantics, he was equally sceptical about the ability of a barely literate working class to write convincingly. [2].

Any restrictions on the choice of subject matter which had survived the romantic age were swept aside and French literature entered the era of the "droit de tout dire et droit de tout d'être dit". [3]. As far as the proletariat

1. Hugo's Les Misérables and Sue's epic Les Mystères du peuple are two good examples of writers' attempts to create a mythology for this class which was making increasing claims on the national conscience.

2. See De la littérature populaire en France, Poulet-Malassis, Paris 1861, p.18.

3. Emile Henriot, Réalistes et naturalistes, Albin Michel, Paris, 1954, p.258.

was concerned, the Goncourts voiced a general feeling when they wrote in the preface to the first edition of their Germinie Lacerteux (1864): "Vivant au dix-neuvième siècle, dans un temps de suffrage universel, de démocratie, de libéralisme, nous nous sommes demandé si ce qu'on appelle „les basses classes„ n'avait pas droit au Roman; si ce monde sous un monde, le peuple, devait rester sous le coup de l'interdit littéraire et des dédains d'auteurs qui ont fait jusqu'ici le silence sur l'âme et le coeur qu'il peut avoir."

This novel by two brothers steeped in the financially secure and intellectually arrogant mentality of the Second Empire bourgeoisie is valuable as an indication both of the direction contemporary literature dealing with the people was taking and of the weaknesses inherent in it. Any attempt to provide an exhaustive inventory of the grisaille of the workers' life was doomed to monotonous repetition of more or less skilfully chosen detail. What the proponents of strict documentation failed to realise was that realism based exclusively on réalité visuelle produced at best a divorced objectivity; where the successful evocation of one social milieu depended exclusively on the superficial observation of it by another. Simple common sense gives the lie to any concept of an absolute descriptive realism which encompasses every possible detail. The Goncourts were reduced, like all the middle class realists, to a process of selective documentation, and at every step of the way their education and social background threatened an accurate choice of detail which could faithfully portray the world they were trying to capture. Realist literary theory is destroyed by the

knowledge that objective perception does not exist. If such novelists as Hugo and Sue bequeathed to literary posterity far less clinical sociology than certain of their successors they did, through a desire to identify with their subject, create a more human portrait in which the people could more easily recognise themselves.

In creating their heroic types the romantics were particular, if the paradox be allowed, to the point of generalisation. Germinie Lacerteux, on the other hand, rarely escapes the level of the strictly temporal and contingent. The story of Germinie and the secret life of debauchery she leads while trying to be a faithful servant to Mlle Varandeuil, was modelled on the life of the Goncourt's own servant Rose Malingre. Not until after Rose's death did they learn about her double existence and it was only then that began to develop their sense of indignation at the social forces which had conspired to force Rose to prostitution and a sordid death. The novel itself includes lengthy verbatim transcriptions of physical and biographical detail about Rose taken from the brothers' Journal. At its best, such borrowing provided authentic glimpses of working class living conditions in Paris during the Second Republic and Second Empire, while at its worst it unbalanced the novel by unnecessary digressions such as those into the career of Germinie's father and the rest of her family history.

The novel never quite dispels the dominant impression that it is the story of a particular woman who lived in an identifiable quarter of Paris between two specific points in history. When it does manage to attain to some statement of the general it does so by exposing a latent bias on the

authors' part which vitiates the desired effect of objectivity. Germinie Lacerteux shows to what extent class background may in fact be a decisive factor for a novelist seeking to exploit proletarian material. Despite the sympathetic manner in which Germinie's resistance to her own degradation is developed, at no point is the reader convinced that, although they might appreciate the servant's predicament, the authors are fully in control of the character. There is an inescapable impression of a de haut en bas approach to the material. On an entirely superficial level the remarkable frequency with which the term peuple recurs in the novels betrays the self-conscious nature of the Goncourts' observation. They were constantly aware of their own social position and, like Balzac and Zola, incapable of completely suppressing their revulsion at the vulgar aspects of the lower classes.

Although the intention may have been to incite among the reading public pity and charity for the workers, the authors could not rid themselves of the conviction that this section of the society was inescapably different. Ten years after the publication of Germinie an entry made by Edmond in the Journal (22 August 1875) suggests how strongly the Goncourts felt about this 'difference'. Looking back over the novels of this period in their career he confessed that: "On ne saura jamais, avec notre timidité naturelle, notre malaise au milieu de la plèbe, notre horreur de la canaille, combien le vilain et le laid document, avec lequel nous avons construit nos livres, nous a coûté".

This hostile attitude is reflected in the bleak description of the social background provided by the quartier against which the events in Germinie's life

are fashioned. The people are uncompromisingly greedy and malicious. The unscrupulousness of Mme Jupillon, the local crémière, and her son to buy whose love Germinie willingly covers herself with debt, and the gratuitous malice of the absinthe-soaked maid Adèle typify the Goncourts' conception of Parisian street life. Although the novel is not totally devoid of more compassionate characters --- Mlle de Varandeuil's concierge, for example --- they are rare and of minor importance. Despite the loyalty professed to 'scientific' documentation the Goncourts shared a vision of the working class which, in spite of themselves, coloured their novel and rendered it as subjective as anything produced by the romantics. They avoided the lifeless proliferation of detail which cluttered the prose of many of their orthodox realist contemporaries and in several ways prepared the public for the naturalism of their arch-rival Zola.

It was by developing the theme of a fatality directing the lives of the workers that the Goncourts anticipated the grinding determinism of Zola's L'Assommoir and Germinal. If Germinie's ruin was not solely attributable to her poverty---after all, she did have a reasonably secure position as housemaid---the inability of her meagre savings to sustain for long Jupillon's interest in her did force her to steal from the mistress she loved. Where the Goncourts significantly prefigured Zola's work, and here Edmond was probably justified in resenting the master naturalist's later success with this theme, was in their concept of an interior fatality motivating their characters. The fatal flaw in Germinie was a sensuality which, dans son sang, was as inexplicable as it was powerful: "Cet amour

heureux et non satisfait produisit dans l'être physique de Germinie un singulier phénomène physiologique. On aurait dit que la passion qui circulait en elle renouvelait et transformait son tempérament lymphatique". [1.] No suggestion is made that this was an inherited trait but the Zolaesque factor of milieu does play a part in her downfall. It is by no means certain that, without the sinister influence of the Jupillons or the other neighbours only too eager to detect a chink in her defence, Germinie would have ended up the broken woman she became.

In developing the power of fate in the life of Germinie, the Goncourts betrayed certain assumptions about working class morals shared by other middle class novelists. The fundamental one was that the masses, and especially the women, were by nature sexually promiscuous. In Germinie Lacerteux the priest to whom Germinie confesses that she was raped in a café observes that she was "promise à la passion par tout son coeur, par tout son corps" and reconstructs for himself the crime: "[...] Cette scène de violence, cette scène où sa très-sincère volonté de résistance paraissait au prêtre avoir été trahie par un étourdissement des sens plus fort qu'elle". [2.] The incident is reminiscent of Guy de Maupassant's first 'rustic' short story "Histoire d'une fille de ferme" (1881) where the narrator restates the priest's reflections more pointedly with reference to the rape of another domestic: "[Rose] ne consentit pas, pour sûr, mais elle résistait nonchalamment, luttant elle-même contre l'instinct toujours plus puissant

1. Edmond et Jules de Goncourt, Germinie Lacerteux, Edizione Scientifiche Italiane, Naples 1968, p.44.

2. Ibid., p.30.

chez les natures simples, et mal protegée par la volonté indécise de ces races inertes et molles". [1] This same presupposition, tacit in the Goncourts' novel and made explicit in Maupassant's work, also helped condition Zola's response to the workers, prompting the seemingly endless accounts of coupling in L'Assommoir and Germinal. The reader is reminded in particular of M.Hennebeau's reflections on the mob of striking miners assembled beneath his windows demanding bread: "Il leur en aurait fait cadeau volontiers, de ses gros appointements, pour avoir, comme eux, le cuir dur, l'accouplement facile et sans regret [...] Il aurait tout donné [...] s'il avait pu être, une journée, le dernier des misérables qui lui obéissaient, libre de sa chair, assez goujat pour gifler sa femme et prendre du plaisir sur les voisines". [2] Although clearly Hennebeau cannot be taken as a self-portrait of the author, the bourgeois characters in Germinal are not unsympathetically treated, despite Zola's obvious sympathy for the exploited miners. They represent that part of Zola which always remained quite consciously middle class and it is not unreasonable to suppose that the general attitudes they possessed to the workers were to an extent shared by the author himself.

What saved Germinie Lacerteux from being pushed completely into the naturalist camp on this question of fatality was the degree of resistance the servant girl

1. Guy de Maupassant, "Histoire d'une fille de ferme", Boule de suif; La Maison Tellier, Gallimard, Paris 1973, p.139.

2. Emile Zola, Germinal, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris 1968, p.349.

was seen to offer. Although ultimately "la Fatalité l'écrasait, et Germinie baissait la tête sous son pied", [1] she did not wholly lose the ability to distinguish between right and wrong ("[...] aussitôt qu'elle y avait cédé, elle se prenait en mépris [...]") [2] and the physiological could never claim a total victory over the psychological. Although the concept of physiological determinism as conveyed in Germinie was not yet as absolute as it became with the naturalists, the Goncourts shared with the later novelists a condescension towards the proletariat of which the attitude to sexuality was symptomatic. Whether or not their approach was properly 'documented', the bourgeois novelists could not avoid a crisis of authority spared later writers drawn from the ranks of the proletariat itself. It is significant that although the theme of destiny plays a central role in the works of all five of the authors examined in this thesis, the concept of a fatalité intérieure is not often found outside the novels of Eugène Le Roy. Emile Guillaumin raises the possibility, notably in Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, but it is there portrayed rather as a tradition of psychological inertia among peasants in the face of change and nowhere is it suggested that it is a latent physical weakness. More commonly, in novels like Philippe's Bubu de Montparnasse and Le Père Perdrix or Marguerite Audoux's Marie-Claire, the fatality is seen as an external one created by social inequality or, occasionally, divine fiat.

1. Germinie Lacerteux, p.117.
2. Ibid., p.97.

Without doubt, Emile Zola's L'Assommoir (1877) and Germinal (1885) represent the culmination of that gradual process whereby the figure of the urban and industrial worker was assimilated into the literature of the middle classes. With his account of Gervaise's brief rise to relative prosperity and descent into degradation, as with the portrayal of the relentless poverty in the life of the Maheu family, Zola proved the workers as worthy of literary interpretation as any other subject that had previously occupied the bourgeois imagination. One of the significant factors in his achievement was the quality, more than the quantity, of the documentation from which he constructed his novels. Zola was certainly not the first author to carry a notebook with him in order to record daily observations taken sur le vif. However, during the first years in Paris and before his writing was bringing him anything like an adequate income, he personally suffered the monotony and deprivation of the working class quartiers. More than anything else it was this experience which allowed him to write about the urban workers with that sense of authority which had always escaped the Goncourts and which eluded Zola himself in his later portrait of the peasants. In writing L'Assommoir he drew on the memories of his days living in the slums, adding to them details of a study of alcoholism which included observations noted in the various débits de boissons where the problem began and the Hôpital Sainte-Anne whence it led. His research for Germinal was equally conscientious. Several months were spent at Anzin where he lived with the workers---a project he failed to fulfil in his preparation for La Terre---drank at their cafés and even ventured down the pits.

Clearly Zola was much more willing to involve himself personally with his subjects than the Goncourts had been, with their reactionary ideas about "la canaille". His theory of the roman expérimental also lent to his works a unity of tone and an impression of purpose which, if it ultimately suffocated the spontaneity of his writing, compared favourably with the disjointed tableaux with which the Goncourts' novels were constructed. Zola, armed with Taine's scientific positivism and Prosper Lucas's theories on heredity, allied to them his own belief in the power of environment over personality. Combined, they produced a vision of society---clearest in its application to the working class---in which the individual will counted for nothing against forces of external and internal determinism. Although the Rougon-Macquart series was not primarily concerned with portraying the proletariat, L'Assommoir, Germinal and La Terre provided a novel picture of the people which shocked contemporary good taste by the crudeness of the language employed and its explicit use of sex.

He emphasised à outrance the misery of the people and established his own sympathy for the workers despite an almost involuntary reaction, difficult not to detect in these works, against the bestiality to which the human nature could be reduced. Zola's sympathy, however, appeared as a statement of fact, not of dogma. In moulding his documentation to the framework of his theory, Zola succeeded in presenting a portrait that was explicitly amoral. Having abandoned romantic pretensions about the ethical role of the writer as guide, naturalist authors like Zola were no longer in their work concerned with the

concepts of good and evil. Instead, they were interested in what they considered to be a faithful representation of man in his social context and a 'scientific' analysis of its development. Until Zola entered the overtly humanitarian phase of his career with the publication of Lourdes in 1894, a phase which included the rest of Les Trois Villes and his Quatre Evangiles, his novels had been free from political overtones. If his work incited pity for the proletariat, it refrained from indicating where appropriate reforms should be made. It was this apparent indifference to social progress that distinguished Zola from the apologists of a new humanism which emerged in the wake of the naturalists. Whether proletarian, socialist, Catholic, or from any other sector of French society, those novelists who in the 1890's rushed to fill the vacuum left by the demise of the naturalists and the decadent writers shared a common bond. They each felt capable of diagnosing the faults in contemporary France and were, to a greater or lesser extent, committed to identifiable forms of action. The socialists and the Catholics were both convinced that, if properly directed, human nature was perfectible --- although they disagreed about whether this perfection was to be found in this world or the next --- and in this respect the underlying tone to their writing was 'progressive'. The proletarian writers, generally unwilling to pledge allegiance to political or religious orthodoxy, were certain that the middle classes were the immediate enemy. They showed themselves less dogmatic, however, about a solution. This thesis will examine authors whose reactions ranged from the revolutionary violence of Le Roy's Jacquou le

croquant, to the bitter but pacific denunciation of bourgeois insensitivity in Philippe's Bubu or Guillaumin's Vie d'un simple, and to the doleful resignation of Audoux's Marie-Claire.

If by writing about the people Zola was simply drawing from what had by then become a fairly well tapped source of inspiration, he came closer than any other middle class novelist would do in conveying the illusion that the novels originated with the people. In creating a style appropriate to the subject matter Zola proceeded on the basis of documented fact. In the case of L'Assommoir this documentation extended to transcriptions of working class speech he had made while frequenting the slums. His decision to use current street idiom not only for dialogue but also in the narrative of the novel helped to break down the linguistic barrier between bourgeois writer and proletarian subject which the artificial style artiste of the Goncourts' had self-consciously created.[1] The method worked well for Zola because it made the narrator part of the communal life of Gervaise's neighbourhood and removed much of the danger of an aloof author passing judgement based, however unwittingly, on class considerations.

Zola's experiment in L'Assommoir was an effective attempt to come to terms with an inevitable stylistic problem for any novelist hoping to create an authentic atmosphere; that is, to convince the reader that the milieu about which he is writing could conceivably have produced the work that the reader is reading. The alternative for a novelist not principally concerned to create this illusion is a preference for the reportage at one remove favoured by the Goncourts.

1. In his preface to Germinie, Enzo Caramaschi makes this observation about the effect of the Goncourts' style:

George Sand, as was obvious from her preface to François le champi, was alive to this problem as was Flaubert, albeit in reference to quite a different social class, when writing Madame Bovary. [1] It is ironic that Zola's very success in evoking a credible atmosphere should be considered a weakness by some detractors. Emile Henriot's criticism of the work, for example, could justifiably have been considered by Zola as approval of his achievement. Signalling the author's "faute d'esthétique et son esclavage", Henriot complains that "A force de vouloir entrer dans la peau de ses personnages, il finit par penser comme eux, par écrire comme eux, s'ils écrivaient [...]" [2].

For the proletarian novelists, supremely conscious of being spokesmen for a gradually emerging class, this question of the representative property of literature was important. In a sense their task was an inverse one to that of their middle class colleagues. Instead of striving, like Zola, to vulgarise a 'standard' French in some attempt to camouflage its bourgeois origins, the difficulty for the proletarian writers, for the most part autodidacts, was to purify various aberrant pronunciations and vocabulary if for no other reason than to make their books marketable. For both, it remained essentially an exercise in reconciling the particular with the general.

By the boldness of his approach it was Zola who left the most vivid impression of the emergent proletariat

> "Le drame de Germinie est présenté au lecteur par l'oeil peintre et la sensibilité artiste des auteurs, et ce livre sur le peuple n'est pas du tout un livre pour le peuple [...]" (Germinie Lacerteux, p.xxvii).

1. See F.W.J. Hemmings, Emile Zola, p.120.
2. Emile Henriot, Réalistes et naturalistes, p.282.

on the nineteenth century novel. Stylistic innovations employed in L'Assommoir effectively eliminated the crisis of authenticity confronting the middle class writers. He was left, however, with a certain crisis of credibility which his subservience to the scientific method in literature would not permit him to dispel entirely. The illusion of reality created was compelling as far as it concerned description of environment or character. Where Zola's work seemed to leave the workers far behind, however, was in its insistence on the absolute power of fatality over human will. Dismissing the independent functioning of mind and body, Zola betrayed himself as still too much the external onlooker whose keen eye had captured the details but, despite a bond of sympathy with the people, had not devined the spark of individual initiative which ignores class boundaries and can exist amid the most appalling misery. "Few of us", writes Professor Hemmings, "are thoroughgoing fatalists; and we do not recognise our fellows in beings who have no hand at all in the guiding of their destinies". [1] As will be seen, none of the proletarian novelists considered in this study was willing to grant fatality that supremacy over the bête humaine it enjoyed in the Rougon-Macquart.

Nonetheless, interspersed throughout their works, echoes are discernible of themes employed by Zola, a credit to the naturalist's sensitivity to proletarian strengths as well as weaknesses. In the proletarians' expressed conviction that their main protection lay in class unity, the reader of Germinal is reminded of Etienne's reflections on the irony of using the army against the striking miners: "[...] ces

1. F.W.J. Hemmings, Emile Zola, p.30.

soldats, pris dans le peuple, et qu'on armait contre le peuple /.../ Il suffisait que l'ouvrier, que le paysan, dans les casernes, se souvînt de son origine". [1] Similarly, in the attacks on their own class made by novelists like Guillaumin in Le Syndicat de Baugignoux or Le Roy in his L'Ennemi de la mort they recall the impatient outbursts from the anarchist Souvarine against the French workers: "Jamais vous ne serez dignes du bonheur, tant que vous aurez quelque chose à vous, et que votre haine des bourgeois viendra uniquement de votre besoin enragé d'être des bourgeois a leur place". [2]

1. Germinal, p.375.
2. Ibid., p.393.

PART TWO

Charles-Louis Philippe; Emile Guillaumin, Eugène Le Roy; Marguerite Audoux; Lucien Jean.

As is true of most developments in literary history, it is misleading to refer to a 'movement' when discussing the proletarian novels in France during the quarter century before the Great War. Rarely are the birth and maturing of a new genre as spontaneous and closely monitored as critics, often understandably for their own convenience, like to claim. This is especially true of the gradual involvement of the French working class in literature. As we have noted above, the increasing production of the proletarian novel from the final decade of the nineteenth century depended upon a convergence of social and economic as well as literary trends which had been evolving for well over half a century. The new proletarian venture into literature constituted a 'movement' only insofar as it recorded a gradual and uneven increase of participation by the workers in literary activity hitherto reserved for the middle and upper classes. It did not benefit from a swell of popular enthusiasm such as that created by the success of Bernardin de Saint-Pierre's Paul et Virginie (1787) and which prepared the way for the romantic era in French literature. Nor was it guided by an articulated programme such as Champfleury's Le Réalisme and Zola's Roman expérimental had provided for realism and naturalism. A formal Ecole prolétarienne with its own manifesto did not come into existence until 1932, decades after the foundations had been laid by an earlier generation of worker-writers. Charles-Louis Philippe, Emile Guillaumin, Eugène Le Roy,

Marguerite Audoux and Lucien Jean represent the first of their class to draw national attention to themselves and their work. It is with specific reference to these novels and the criticism they generated that the central section of this thesis examines the result of the proletariat's first sustained experiment in self expression.

Sharing a common poverty which made the possibility of publishing extremely remote, these novelists owe the survival of their writing to a combination of tenacity and sheer chance. Certainly some were luckier than others. Charles-Louis Philippe was from an early stage the protégé of André Gide and the entire facilities of the newly formed Nouvelle Revue Française were eventually placed at his disposal. The phenomenal success of Marguerite Audoux's Marie-Claire was due in great part to enthusiastic intervention by Francis Jourdain and Octave Mirbeau excited at the novelty --- extremely short-lived, as it happened --- of a book written by an ageing sempstress losing her eye sight. Similarly, Eugène Le Roy owed his discovery entirely to the chance perusal of one of his stories appearing en feuilleton by a senator in a provincial station filling in time between trains. Emile Guillaumin and Lucien Jean were less favoured by fortune and the impressive dimensions of Guillaumin's published work are as much the result of his peasant stubborness in the face of opposition as the reward of an undeniable literary ability. Jean, with Philippe an impoverished gratte-papier at the Hôtel de Ville in Paris, was doomed to complete obscurity if it had not been for his friend's efforts to see him published after Jean's untimely death at the age of thirty-eight.

For various reasons of circumstance, the greatest

disparity exists in the relative proportions of material published by these five authors. Charles-Louis Philippe was certainly the most prolific and produced six novels, two volumes of short stories, an impressive bibliography of articles and _comptes rendus_ for periodicals and provoked considerable response from contemporary critics. His close friend Lucien Jean on the other hand was the author of only one volume, a posthumous collection of his various prose writings. In a strict sense Jean cannot be considered a novelist at all but both because of the personal influence he had on Philippe and because in several respects his was the most sophisticated literary accomplishment of these working class autodidacts, any account of this stage of proletarian literature must include an analysis of his contribution. Similarly, the dimension of the work of both Guillaumin and Le Roy dwarfs that of Marguerite Audoux yet each of these writers, while sharing certain assumptions born of their similar backgrounds, is equally remarkable for the originality of style his own particular perspective brought to the _genre_.

We have not considered the differences in dimension of their _oeuvres_ a handicap in our choice of these five novelists. Such unevenness serves, on the contrary, to illustrate better the tentative nature of the effort being made and the precarious existence of the proletarian writer during this initial twenty-five year period. In post-War France the workers' movement as a whole became better coordinated, and a more organised sense of class unity developed than had been possible up to the 1914-18 conflict. As the power and political sophistication of the trade union movement continued to grow and the material position of the

workers improved, the nature of their literature changed. It became a 'secure' literature supported by organised labour with its periodicals, literary prizes and subventions in much the same way as that once patronised by wealthy individuals. Once the proletariat could afford the luxury of a sustained interest in politics, the temptation to harness the power of imaginative literature for overtly political ends proved irresistible. It is precisely this 'committed' element in the work of politically active writers, like those of the Ecole prolétarienne which grew up around Henry Poulaille's Nouvel Age, that distinguishes them from their pre-War predecessors.

The choice of writers to be included in this study is, inevitably, an arbitrary one. It is our opinion that together they produced the most satisfying of the considerable body of proletarian literature, of very uneven quality, which appeared before the First War. They were also the first to draw any measure of national acclaim. In the selection of at least two --- Philippe and Marguerite Audoux --- we are supported by the very favourable reception they found among such contemporary masters as André Gide, Valery Larbaud, Romain Rolland and Arnold Bennett. Philippe, especially, attracted the attention of literary critics of the stature of Georg Lukács, Henri Ghéon, Marcel Schwob and Ernest-Charles. Unfortunately, in their eagerness to establish a cultural heritage for an increasingly vociferous and articulate working class, various apologists since the First War have overlooked the weaknesses in proletarian literature and done their cause a disservice by making claims for it which beg refutal. Representative of these is Edouard Dolléans who, in his preface to a history of

workers' literature, isolates Philippe, Jean, Guillaumin and Marguerite Audoux as "la partie classique": "Quatre écrivains que nous n'hésitons pas à classer parmi les plus grands de la littérature française". [1] An examination of the novels involved will show to what extent Dolléans' commitment to the workers makes nonsense of his critical judgment.

Although individual novels such as Philippe's Bubu de Montparnasse, Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant and Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple still enjoy some reputation inside France, most of the works of this early group of proletarian writers have been forgotten. Although many are undoubtedly flawed by an imperfect literary training common to this generation of working class autodidacts, there is much worthy of the attention of a modern reading public increasingly interested in a literature of the working classes. If this group of writers remains obscure to most French readers beyond a relatively small circle of initiates it is virtually unknown outside the boundaries of France. With the occasional exception these novels have attracted few translators, and editions in our own language are especially rare. Consequently, little is known in the English-speaking world about the lives of these five writers and their contribution to French literature. For this reason the thesis includes, as well as discussion of the novels, biographical information which it is hoped will reconstruct for the English reader something of the obscure background of these novelists. This dimension is necessary to appreciate

1. Michel Ragon, Histoire de la littérature ouvrière du Moyen Age à nos jours, Paris 1953, p.16.

what is in the final analysis as much a sociological as a literary phenomenon. We hope to have given enough such material to help place these five writers in their historical perspective. They lived and wrote at a time when the tide of philosophical and literary opinion was turning against the bleak pessimism of the naturalists. By 1890 the social misery caused by the excesses of the Industrial Revolution had made even the most hidebound positivist abandon his confidence in the morality of science and technology. After an absence of half a century idealism, whether metaphysical or humanitarian, was reasserting itself.

In the sphere of literature this coincided with --- and was stimulated by --- the 'invasion' of France by the Russian novel in the latter half of the 1880's. [1] The humanism of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, based on compassion for the poor and the criminal, infected contemporary French authors and influenced the direction which post-naturalist French literature followed. The attention of the public was drawn back to social problems which had been raised earlier in Hugo's Misérables and Sue's Mystères. Cynicism about the moral weakness of the people inspired by novels like Germinie Lacerteux as well as the horror provoked by the baseness of the workers in L'Assommoir and La Terre gave way to a more indulgent, and often sentimental, view of the lower classes. A Russian emphasis on the suffering of the socially deprived appealed to the compassion of the reading public and made them more willing to learn about this hitherto silent majority. This renewed interest came at a time when

1. For the best study in English on the influence of the Russians see E.W.J. Hemmings, The Russian Novel in France 1884-1914, Oxford University Press, 1950.

the workers themselves were developing a keener consciousness of corporate identity and for the first time were able to produce writers of their own capable of giving a first hand account of proletarian life.

If there was no acknowledged leader of this formative stage of the proletarian novel, it is quite clear that Charles-Louis Philippe was the frère aîné of the movement. Although it is essential not to equate Philippe with the movement itself, as consideration of the impressive scope of his writing has led more than one critic to do, Philippe undoubtedly did more than anyone else to win acceptance for the proletarian novel in Parisian literary circles. [1.] Convinced that writing --- and certainly not the routine of a petty civil servant's life --- was the only occupation that would satisfy him, he proved tireless in his efforts to be published. His persistence as much as his unusual background attracted attention in the literary circles of the capital and he made friends of several well known and well placed authors of the day.

In 1898 he met Francis Jammes and André Gide, both Gide and Philippe contributing at that time to the review

1. Jean Giraudoux's friendship with Philippe certainly caused him to exaggerate the novelist's contribution to the proletarian movement. Writing after Philippe's death in 1909, it is clear that Giraudoux considered the proletarian novel to have died with him: "Ce fut une révolte brève, qui, comme il se devait, fut close /.../ abruptement par la rapide mort de celui qui l'avait provoquée /.../ La France perdait le seul de ses écrivains qui, né du peuple, n'eût pas trahi le peuple en écrivant". (Littérature, Paris 1967, pp.77-78).

L'Ermitage. [1] His friendship with Léon-Paul Fargue and Stuart Merrill also dates from this period, although he did not meet Valery Larbaud until 1906 when introduced by a friend from his schooldays, Marcel Ray. [2] Philippe, in his turn, brought several of these writers together, taking Larbaud to Auteuil to meet Gide in early autumn 1908. [3] He also introduced both Larbaud and Fargue to his compatriote, Emile Guillaumin, and it was through Philippe that Larbaud and Giraudoux were first put in touch. [4]

From his correspondence with Gide it is clear that Paul Claudel had followed Philippe's career with interest

1. It was Jammes who had first put Gide into contact with the author of Bubu de Montparnasse. See Gide's letter (December 1909) to Jammes: "Tu te souviendras de ces journées de La Roque ou tu me parlas de lui pour la première fois et me dis: „Tu devrais lui écrire„, ce que je fis aussitôt." (Francis Jammes - André Gide, Correspondance 1893-1938, Paris 1948, p.266).

2. Fargue recorded some of his memories of Philippe in his Piéton de Paris, Paris 1939, pp.12-13; 100, and in the "Kriegsspiel" chapter of Sous la lampe, Paris 1937.

3. See Larbaud's letter of 23 March 1911 to Gide. "Je ne puis vous exprimer à quel point je suis heureux de savoir que vous me dédiez votre étude sur Philippe /.../ Vous avez, n'est-ce pas? songé à commémorer ainsi cette fin d'après-midi que nous avons passée ensemble, Philippe, vous et moi, dans votre petite chambre. C'était notre première recontre". (Valery Larbaud, Lettres à André Gide, Paris and La Haye, 1948, p.24). See also Paul Claudel - André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926, Paris 1949, p.319n.

4. Valery Larbaud, Lettres à André Gide, p.173n.

since 1905 when he first read Bubu de Montparnasse ("un livre grossier et touchant [...] qui m'a fait frémir"). [1] From that same year date his attempts to lead Philippe, who had not been in a church since his First Communion, back to the Faith and his elegy to Philippe, who died in December 1909, appeared the following year in the 15th February number of the Nouvelle Revue Française. [2] Gide himself never made any secret of his admiration for Philippe and in a letter (14 December 1909) to Francis Jammes he announced his plans to "réimprimer en éditions parfaites les grandes oeuvres de notre littérature". Besides himself, the authors whom he considered worthy of the edition included Stendhal, Claudel, Jammes, Verhaeren and Philippe. [3]

1. Paul Claudel - André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926. Letter of 7 November 1905 (p.53). See also his letters of 27 December 1909 (p.113) and 2 February 1910 (p.119) for appreciations of Philippe's Croquignole and Charles Blanchard.

2. See Claudel's letter of 30 December 1909 to Gide. (Paul Claudel - André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926, p.114) Gide considered that Claudel's religious overtures had had some effect and that in the last two years of his life Philippe was close to conversion. (André Gide, Charles-Louis Philippe, Paris 1911, p.21) His justification for believing this was slight and grounded on a few lines of a letter (2 July 1907) he received from Philippe discussing the moral choice implicit in the Retour de l'enfant prodique: "Hâte-toi, sois un homme, choisis. Je sais d'avance ce que tu choisiras. Nous le choisirons tous". Nothing in the rest of Philippe's correspondence or his novels indicates that he was prepared to take such a step, and it seems more reasonable to agree with his life long friend Marcel Ray who maintained that to the end Philippe remained unconvinced. (Marcel Ray, "L'Enfance at la jeunesse de Charles-Louis Philippe", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.xiv, 1910, p.193).

3. Francis Jammes - André Gide, Correspondance 1893-1938, p.263.

Two letters written in 1904 by Jammes to Edmond Pilon, although their enthusiasm undoubtedly owes much to the friendship between the two men, do convey Jammes' estimation of Philippe. On 24 January he had written to his friend that "Peut-être es-tu le seul avec Charles-Louis Philippe qui, depuis un an, parmi les nouveaux venus, aies fait passer au profond de mon être ce frisson qui donne envie de poser un livre en sanglotant." In his letter of 22 August he confirmed that "Tu es l'un des deux plus grands prosateurs de ta génération. Le deuxième est Charles-Louis Philippe." [1].

Both Gide and Larbaud appeared to defer on occasion to Philippe's literary acumen. At one juncture at least in Gide's often strained friendship with Francis Jammes he influenced Gide's reaction to the other man's work, to Jammes' considerable annoyance. The occasion was the publication in 1902 of Le Triomphe de la vie and especially the verse satire 'Existences' which it contained and which drew much hostile comment even from Jammes' friends. He was especially offended by the opposition of Gide, "qui a cru devoir appuyer son avis sur celui de Charles-Louis Philippe". [2]. After their first meeting in 1906 it

1. See Robert Mallet, Francis Jammes; sa vie, son oeuvre, Paris 1961, p.245. The article Jammes wrote for the memorial edition of the Nouvelle Revue Française devoted to Philippe (15 February 1910) was uncharacteristically cold. When Gide refused to include it, a quarrel ensued which can be traced in the correspondence between the two men from 29 December 1909 to 8 February 1911. (See Francis Jammes - André Gide, Correspondance 1893-1938, pp.269-273) For a further account of this disagreement, echoes of which are unmistakable in Gide's journal entry for 30 December 1909, see Robert Mallet's volume on Jammes, p.264.

2. Paul Claudel - André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926. Note by editor Robert Mallet, p.301.

became customary for Larbaud to consult Philippe before having any of his material published. It was, for example, on Philippe's express advice that he first sent the manuscript of Fermina Marquez to the Grande Revue in 1908. [1] Philippe also used his influence with Gide to have the doors of the Nouvelle Revue Française opened to Larbaud. The publication of Larbaud's Dolly in the N.R.F. (October 1909) was one result of this intervention. [2] Having established this personal as well as professional relationship with several of the leading contemporary writers, Philippe's name spread through these channels much more rapidly and extensively than that of any other writer from his class, and he soon established himself as the vanguard of the proletarian advance.

Of the four authors covered by this thesis, only Eugène Le Roy was not a personal friend of Philippe's. The professional relationship, however, of Jean, Guillaumin and Marguerite Audoux with Philippe was at most tangential and there is little evidence to suggest any direct stylistic influence. They never constituted in any meaningful way what Larbaud was certain that literary historians would call "l'école de Charles-Louis Philippe" [3] and were free to develop individual styles to treat a wide range of themes.

1. See Albert Fournier, "Charles-Louis Philippe: Cinquante ans après sa mort", Europe, No.377, September 1960, p.8 and Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin No.23, December 1965, p.44.

2. See Léon-Paul Fargue-Valery Larbaud, Correspondance, 1910-1946, (Th. Alajouanine, ed.), Paris 1971, p.7.

3. Valery Larbaud, Ce Vice impuni, la lecture, Oeuvres complètes de Valery Larbaud, Vol.7, Paris 1953, p.316.

United in their sympathy for the poor, they differed not only in their artistic treatment of the problem but also in their political response. This varied from Le Roy's uncompromising republicanism, through Guillaumin's socialism to the apparent political indifference of Philippe and Marguerite Audoux.

Guillaumin, occupied with his farm in Ygrande (Allier), on several occasions made use of his friend in the capital to try and have his works placed with publishers. Marguerite Audoux, whose formal education had been particularly scanty, had recourse to Philippe after writing Marie-Claire for advice on certain stylistic points as well as for the correction of her spelling. Lucien Jean, a reserved and sickly man whom Philippe first met when he took up his position at the Hôtel de Ville, became Philippe's closest friend. [1] Eugène Le Roy, a generation older than the other four, is nonetheless included not only by virtue of his peasant background but because his work illustrates especially well the evolution of a certain form of the proletarian novel from nineteenth century regionalist literature. His main work, Jacquou le croquant inspired several imitations, the most important being Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple.

All of the authors shared Philippe's sympathy for the chronically indigent among whom they lived. With him they were devoted to a second profession as writers --- less,

1. See Philippe's letter of 18 January 1898 to the Belgian poet Henri Vandeputte shortly after he had made Jean's acquaintance. "[...] Il y a un pauvre homme, qui est souffrant, qui est marié à vingt-sept ans et que j'aime pour la pureté de sa vie et de la belle clarté de son âme. Je t'en parlerai quelque jour, il deviendra mon ami, je crois, il est très fin, peut-être écrira-t-il de belles choses, j'en aurais un grand plaisir". (Ch.-L. Philippe, Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, Paris 1957, p.77).

surprisingly, for the inherent propaganda value of literature than for more traditional considerations of form. All were conscious of their social background and convinced that the proletariat had a unique and hitherto stifled contribution to make to the national literature. Although the themes of social injustice and bourgeois insensitivity recur in most of their work, these five authors set the tone for this early period of the proletarian novel by their willingness to develop within the existing traditions of middle-class culture. Unlike later Marxist theorists of the genre who envisaged workers' literature as the ultimate stage of literary development, supplanting everything that had gone before --- the 'new' art for the 'new' class --- these pre-War writers had a more modest regard for their own significance. This was due in part to the fact that they were still dependent upon bourgeois suffrance if their works were to be edited. Despite the growth of the penny press and a proliferation of liberal and radical periodicals during the Third Republic, the lasting reputation of a writer was still made by attracting the interest of one of the major publishing houses or literary reviews. These were firmly in the handsof the wealthy, and editorial boards, always with one eye on a complacent and middle class reading public from which they drew most of their support, were unlikely to sanction anything that savoured too much of social revolution. It is perhaps significant that the most 'revolutionary' of the five authors, Eugène Le Roy, never had the ambition to establish a literary reputation and was content to write for his local press in a remote corner of Périgord. Only as a result of the efforts of two highly placed and unusually eclectic admirers did Le Roy's reputation extend beyond the Dordogne and could his fiery Jacquou le croquant eventually find itself in

Fasquelle's list of titles for 1900.

Other considerations apart, the choice of these particular five writers presents the picture of a cross section of the proletariat --- urban, rural and villageois --- as it existed at the beginning of the present century. Lucien Jean and Charles-Louis Philippe, despite the latter's provincial roots, were both petits salariés in the capital. Emile Guillaumin, on the other hand, lived all his life on his farm at Ygrande while Marguerite Audoux, even after moving to Paris, remained very much the farm servant from the Sologne the memories of which inspired her best writing. Eugène Le Roy, the son of domestics in the chateau at Hautefort (Périgord), was brought up among the local peasantry, eventually gained the post of provincial tax collector and became acquainted with many of the villages in Périgord. His observations on life in these rural communities formed the basis of most of his novels.

Charles-Louis Philippe: Biographical Summary.

Charles-Louis Philippe was born on 4 August 1874 in Cérilly (Allier), in the old department of the Bourbonnais. He was the only son among three children, and his father Charles Philippe was the village clog-maker. [1.] His upbringing was spartan but there is no evidence that he ever lacked the essentials, and certainly he himself never overemphasised the poverty of his childhood. This point is worth establishing here since many critics have attempted to make a cult figure of Philippe by exaggerating the humbleness of his proletarian background. [2.] This mythe de misère grew rapidly and was undoubtedly encouraged by the scenes of rural deprivation Philippe described in novels like Le Père Perdrix and Charles Blanchard. [3.] These enthusiasts ignored the fact that in Le Père Perdrix it is the lives of the towns people and not his own family that the narrator observes and that

1. Apart from a twin sister Louise, Philippe had a half-sister Félicie Déschâtre (b.1866). Félicie was illegitimate, the product of an affair that Philippe's mother had had in her youth, and was brought up in Louroux away from the family. (See Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, Paris 1943, p.32) When of age she was placed in apprenticeship with a sempstress but soon fell ill and was brought in 1881 to Cérilly to live with the family. She died on 3 September of the same year. Philippe took his half-sister as his model for the dying Madeleine in his nouvelle, La Bonne Madeleine.

2. See Florian-Parmentier, La Littérature de l'époque; Histoire de la littérature française de 1885 à nos jours, Paris 1914, p.388. The description of Philippe as "fils du peuple le plus misérable" is representative of this strain of opinion.

3. Le Père Perdrix, Fasquelle, Paris 1903; Charles Blanchard, Nouvelle Revue Française, Paris 1913.

Charles Blanchard was intended as an account of the life of the author's father. Fearing that it might lead to misinterpretation of his work, several of Philippe's better informed friends, among them Jean Giraudoux who had lived in Cérilly at the same time as Philippe and Emile Guillaumin, made efforts to counter this growing legend. In a preface to Le Père Perdrix Jean Vaudal remarked that "/Philippe/ ne fut un vrai pauvre; il connut la privation, jamais la faim ou le dénuement. Giraudoux écrit excellemment: „Il était pauvre comme tout le monde l'est, à part les riches„." [1.] Guillaumin suggested that, far from starving, the Philippe family even enjoyed modest comfort as the boy grew older. [2.] Philippe himself confirmed this in a letter (26 December 1896) to Henri Vandeputte. [3.]

Concomitant with this exaggeration of the poverty of his early life was the widespread assumption that he was a melancholy dogged by poor health. [4.] Again this was partly

1. Le Père Perdrix, Stock, Paris 1948, p.xvi. See also the essay, "Charles-Louis Philippe", from which Vaudal is quoting in Giraudoux's Littérature, p.86, Charles-Henry Hirsch, in the Mercure de France (1st November 1911), wrote that a very different picture of Philippe emerged from the author's correspondence than that given by some misguided critics. "/.../ plus combatif, plus énergique, assurément doux, sensible, mais loin d'être celui dont on a pu écrire, de la meilleure foi du monde, cette monstruosité; que la maladie et la pauvreté lui étaient nécessaires, qu'il les aimait." (p.158).

2. "Ayant réussi dans un petit commerce des bois du noyer, /le père/ avait acquis une modeste aisance et n'exerçait plus effectivement son métier". ("Charles-Louis Philippe en Bourbonnais", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.xiv, 1910, p.208).

3. Lettres de Jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.12. This correspondence comprises sixty-three letters covering the period 1896-1907.

4. See for example the view of Charles Beuchat who

due to the maudlin depictions of childhood illness which occupied an important place in his early works, notably La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie [1.] and La Mère et l'enfant [2.] both of which Philippe envisaged as family memoirs as much as works of imaginative literature. It is true that as a young man he seemed particularly susceptible to highly sentimental personal attachments. Although a tendency to romanticise relationships is not perhaps uncommon in young men in their early twenties, Philippe exhibited a particularly keen appetite for friendship which often bordered on the passionate. [3.] Louis Lanoizelée, for example, provides an account of Philippe's remarkable reaction to Vandeputte's departure for Brussels after the two writers' first meeting in Paris

considered that "Philippe a exprimé la délicatesse douloureuse d'une âme ulcérée [...]". (Ch. Beuchat, Histoire du naturalisme français, Vol.II, Paris 1949, p.388).

1. La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie, Bibliothèque artistique et littérarire, Paris 1898. The book comprises two nouvelles, "La Bonne Madeleine" and "La Pauvre Marie". The former first appeared under the title "La Vie et la mort délicates de Madeleine" in the Mercure de France, Vol.xxviii, October 1898, pp.53-75. As mentioned above this story was based on Philippe's half-sister. The history of "La Pauvre Marie" a crippled girl who waits in vain for a suitor, is patterned on the life of another resident of Cérilly: Marie Buffenoir (b.23 July 1860) who died aged 55 in the town hospital on 4 June 1916.

2. La Mère et l'enfant, Bibliothèque artistique et littéraire, Paris 1900.

3. This is immediately apparent in all his correspondence with Vandeputte. See, for example, his letter of 18 June 1897: "Je t'aime infiniment, et je t'embrasse en songeant à cette joie délicate que j'aurais à te voir ici, à passer mon bras sous le tien, à sentir ta vie à côté de la mienne". (Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.43).

in March 1897: "Après le départ de son ami, Charles-Louis Philippe est très déprimé. Son travail de bureau ne lui plaît guère. Il ne sympathise pas avec ses collègues. Il traverse des hauts et des bas étonnants, avec de violentes crises de larmes". [1.] Although too much importance should not be attached to this aspect of his character, an examination of his novels will show that Philippe never entirely outgrew this tendency to lachrymose sentimentality and that it constitutes a major flaw in the work pre-dating Bubu de Montparnasse (1901). [2.] This misconception among critics about Philippe's physical and temperamental delicacy was also partly due to his diminutive stature (1m.53) accompanied by a noticeable scar on the left side of his face, the result of an infection of the jawbone he suffered as a child. Apart from that, the letters he wrote to Vandeputte and others during the course of his life give no indication of anything more than the usual number of adult ailments and a slight tendency to hypochondria. Both Guillaumin and Larbaud who knew Philippe well regretted this distortion of the facts made by many contemporary critics. Guillaumin, remarking on the commemorative articles that appeared in the press following Philippe's death, described them as "éloges de ton juste en général, avec cependant quelques erreurs, quelques outrances contribuant à maintenir la légende de l'homme miséreux, triste, malade

1. Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe: l'homme, l'écrivain, Paris 1953, p.39.

2. Bubu de Montparnasse, Editions de la Revue blanche, Paris 1901.

et contrefait". [1] Larbaud made the same point in a lecture he gave at the Moulins town hall in 1911: "Depuis un an, beaucoup de gens prétendent l'avoir connu, qui n'ont fait que l'entrevoir. De là vient qu'on l'a fait passer pour plus pauvre qu'il n'était, et pour maladif, lui qui était si bien portant, si bien équilibré moralement et physiquement". [2]

Having attended the village school in Cérilly, Philippe attained one of the government bursaries available to the children of the poor and entered the collège at Montluçon in 1886. After receiving his baccalauréat in 1891 he was sent to the lycée in Moulins where for the next three years he studied mathematics in preparation for the entrance examinations to the Ecole polytechnique. At this point it

1. Emile Guillaumin, Mon Compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, Paris 1942, p.195. See also his article in La Revue hebdomadaire (30 September 1911): "Nous nous voyions chaque année aux vacances, une distance de trois lieues seulement séparant nos demeures. Plus d'une fois il fit à pied ce petit voyage, car il n'était pas du tout maladif ainsi que certains l'ont affirmé". (p.664) Philippe and Guillaumin, despite the proximity of their villages, met for the first time in Cérilly on 18 September 1901. They had not been, as Robert Mallet claims, friends since childhood. (Paul Claudel - André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926, p.294).

2. Text reprinted in Larbaud's Ce Vice impuni la lecture, p.289. See also Marguerite Audoux's comments quoted by Jacques de Fourchambault in Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet. "--- Ne croyez pas ceux qui ont dit que Philippe était triste et contrefait. Il était très gai [...]" (p.157) Compare the reflections of Gide in 1909 contemplating Philippe's body at the Paris clinic where he died. "[...] Ceux qui ne le connaîtront que par [le masque du mort] n'imagineront pas l'expression totale de ce petit être râblé [...] Oui, Toulouse-Lautrec était aussi peu haut que lui, mais contrefait; Philippe était d'aplomb; il avait de petites mains, de petits pieds, des jambes courtes; le front bien fait. Près de lui, au bout d'un peu de temps, on prenait honte d'être trop grand". (Journal 1889-1939, Paris 1948, pp.281-282).

was Philippe's ambition to join the army and serve in the colonies, and in this he was supported by his family. Like most of the working class Philippe's parents, and especially his mother, hoped to see their children rise at least one rung in the social ladder. For the Philippes the security of a military commission was an acceptable manner to achieve this and, failing that, a career in the Ponts et chaussées. At the end of his training in Moulins Philippe was refused entrance to the Polytechnique because of his height and a subsequent application to the Ecole centrale was equally unsuccessful. Because of the time and the money already invested in his education, to remain in Cérilly and follow his father's trade was unthinkable. In December 1894 he left the town for Paris to try and find suitable employment there. "Il pensait," wrote Marcel Ray, "que son diplôme de bachelier et ses trois années de mathématiques spéciales allaient lui ouvrir toutes les avenues de la vie, et qu'il n'aurait qu'à choisir parmi les métiers aimables". [1.]

He met with no success, however, and was forced to take a minor clerical post with the Pharmacie centrale du Service de santé militaire in January 1895. The salary was derisory --- 3frs.75 a day --- and from a letter of the period written to Ray it is clear that Philippe still had not abandoned his career ambitions and in his spare time was revising mathematics to sit the examinations for the "Ponts et chaussées de la Ville de Paris". The same letter, however, shows traces both of activist revolutionary sympathies --- the exuberances of a young man frustrated

1. Marcel Ray, "L'Enfance et la Jeunesse de Charles-Louis Philippe", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.xiv, 1910, p.184.

in his attempts to find decent employment --- and an identification with the urban working class: "Luttes altruistes: voici mon voeu. Préparer les foules aux revendications, toutes, [...] puis ayant condensé toutes les souffrances et toutes les forces perdues, buter comme des rocs contre la vieille baraque sociale où nous sommes [...] Et infusons-nous dans les classes ouvrières, et vivons leur vie très proche, et voyons leur désir, et soyons leur chose". [1.] Although sympathy for the lower classes motivated all of Philippe's prose, apart from several gratuitously anarchic short stories and chroniques written for Le Canard sauvage and Matin designed to shock the bourgeois, the concept of social revolution played little part in either his life or his work. [2.] During this first stay in the capital Philippe regularly attended Mallarmé's mardis and was in the frequent company of a small group of writers with proletarian sympathies. They included Léon Frapié, Léon Riotor, Marcel Batilliat and

1. Dated "janvier 1895; Paris, 62, rue St-Dominique". "Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, Vol.3, 1910, p.238.

2. Le Canard sauvage was a satirical review which published thirty-one numbers between March and October 1903 and each one, except number thirty, carried a récit by Philippe. These were collected and published by the Nouvelle Revue Française in 1923 under the title Chroniques du Canard sauvage. For Philippe's strongest attacks on the morality of the prevailing social order see "Deux Crimes", "Le Crime de la rue Chalgrin" and his apology for political assassination in "L'Assassinat du président Mac-Kinley". In 1908 Philippe was approached by Jean Giraudoux and Franz Toussaint, then literary editors of Matin, and asked to produce some stories for the paper. Between September 1908 and September 1909 Matin printed a total of fifty of Philippe's stories. Twenty-four of these were published by the Nouvelle Revue Française in 1916 under the title Les Contes du Matin. See especially "Deux Apaches". Other of these stories originally written for Matin were included by Philippe in a collection entitled Dans la petite ville (Fasquelle, Paris 1910).

the Pelloutier brothers who, under the direction of Louis Lumet, founded the self-styled art social periodical L'Enclos. [1.]

In May, discouraged by his lack of success in the capital, he returned to Cérilly. The summer of 1895 was decisive in shaping the direction which Philippe's career followed. Continued attempts to acquire a position worthy of his training --- including an appeal to the local landowner to use his influence --- failed. The resulting humiliation of being unemployed in a town full of workers and increasing criticism from his parents combined to make him abandon his earlier hopes of social advancement. Doubtlessly realising that anything was better than the situation at home he decided to return to Paris and make his living by writing, a hobby in which he had been dabbling since his days at the lycée.

During that summer he turned to writing partly as a refuge from the increasingly strident reproaches of his father and as an outlet for his impatience at not having secured a job. A letter to Marcel Ray in July conveyed this disappointment and the resentment Philippe felt towards a system which educated the children of the working class and then refused to employ them.: "Je ne veux pas te déclamer toutes les idées moroses qui me viennent, je me borne à constater qu'un garçon un peu intelligent et honnête ne trouve dans cette superbe société que des pans de mur pour se frapper la tête". [2.] The "Journal de la vingtième

1. In 1897 each of his Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour having appeared separately in the review, they were collected and published by L'Enclos as Philippe's first volume of prose.

2. Nouvelle Revue Française, No.xiv, 1910, pp.240-241.

année", which is the earliest surviving prose by Philippe, was written in Cérilly during the summer of 1895. [1.] Its subtitle, "Un essai d'analyse du dégoût et de la débâcle intime d'un jeune homme", betrays the tone as well as the content of the passage. As might be anticipated from the diary format, he indulged a general despair which ranged from his lack of friends to his physical ugliness. "En résumé, il se porte tout entier en lui-même, n'a pas de relations intimes, pas de bonheur physique ou moral, pas de joie. Il lui vient par conséquent des désespoirs de lassitude, à la vision du triste identique". [2.]

Written when Philippe was barely twenty-one years old, the puerile effusions of this composition are unimportant in themselves but they do anticipate a more significant development in the "Journal de Roger Jan" published two years later. It is impossible not to see in this second diary, which comprised one of the Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour, an extension of the earlier essay. In it is found the same cynicism and sense of betrayal but it differs from the "Journal de la vingtième

Another letter in December to the same friend indicated that he had already developed that habit of recording observations of his neighbours and friends which, continued later in Paris, helps account for the highly autobiographical nature of his work. "Je me console de mes désespoirs en étudiant les gens que je vois, --- et pour cela je remercie la destinée car Cérilly possède de ces types au contact desquels on apprend tous les éléments de la bêtise". (Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.23, December 1965, p.24).

1. Published in the Nouvelle Revue Française, No.xiv, 1910, pp.218-236.

2. Ibid., p.225.

année" by its recriminations against the parents. The tone is disrespectful in the extreme and the work provides Philippe's only admission of the violence of his emotions at this stage in his development. Any hint of criticism of his family was censored in all subsequent writing, with the result that the two novels which deal directly with the subject of his parents, La Mère et l'enfant and Charles Blanchard, often sacrifice their credibility to the author's nostalgia. It seems unbelievable that the author of La Mère et l'enfant, which self-consciously idealised the mother-child relationship, could three years earlier so systematically have debunked both the innocence of childhood and parental devotion in language occasionally approaching the vulgar. [1.] This volte-face is less surprising when one considers that La Mère et l'enfant was written after Philippe had spent a considerable time away from home and that his correspondence indicates that Paris was far from his liking. [2.]

1. See La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie, Gallimard, Paris 1961, pp.97-113, which includes the Quatre Histoires. Two extracts will serve to convey the cynicism of the "Journal" towards both child and parent:

> Des gens se marient à cause de l'Amour et l'Amour n'est pas.
> Puis ils espèrent un enfant. Il vient. Et à l'âge des ingénuités, il se masturbe dans un coin. (p.105)

> Parce qu'un jour de joie vous /parents/ avez cédé à l'émoi de vos ventres, râlant obscurément dans la sueur des corps, et parce que cet acte d'égoïsme à deux a mis un être dans la matrice d'une femelle, vous voulez de cet être respect et amour! (p.110)

2. See Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte (15 October 1897): "Paris est le lieu du monde le plus laid /.../ Oh! comme j'aime la campagne, et que les forêts et les champs me paraissent plus beaux que le Louvre et Notre-Dame! /.../ Ici, je ne sais pas, il y a trop de bruit, et trop d'êtres qui m'agacent". (pp.59-60).

Absence was bound to blunt much of the earlier hostility, and during the first years in Paris his reading was dominated by the novels of Dostoievsky. The Russian's humanitarianism did much to encourage a growing sentimentality which held sway in Philippe's writing until checked around the turn of the century by his acquaintance with the works of Nietzsche. [1.]

In December 1895 Philippe returned to Paris where the following year he managed to obtain a post at 125 francs a month with the Hôtel de Ville as "commis auxiliaire au service de l'Eclairage" in the fourth arrondissement. In 1898 he moved to the Service technique des Egouts (curage et entretien) at an annual salary of 2,000 francs. This employment secured his livelihood but necessarily relegated his writing to the free hours of the evening and holidays. In July 1902, through the influence of Maurice Barrès who admired his writing, Philippe entered the Service Extérieur des Concessions sur la Voie Publique as "piqueur de 3ème classe". His duties were in great part limited to inspecting the relatively few pavement stalls on the Boulevard Saint-Germain. This entailed only a few hours' work each day and left Philippe much freer to pursue his favoured career as novelist. [2.]

1. A volume of Philippe's work consisting of selections from La Mère et l'enfant, La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie and Charles Blanchard was published to give an impression, as the editor Henri Buriot-Darsiles explained, of Philippe's character "à l'état pur, avant les principaux apports de Paris, avant qu' /il/ ait découvert le nietzschéisme". (La Mère et l'enfant; La Bonne Madeleine; La Pauvre Marie; Charles Blanchard, Crépin-Leblond, Moulins 1937).

2. One critic at least, the self-styled "revolutionary socialist" Georges Sorel, resented Barrès' intervention and considered that Philippe had betrayed his class and become one of the middle class paresseux: "Ce prétendu aède de la pauvreté n'est pas contraint de perdre plus de deux après-midi par semaine à l'Hôtel de Ville...Il est difficile de montrer plus de mépris pour le travail que n'en ont les amis d'André Gide qui savent si bien pleurnicher sur les misères humaines".

Philippe had a small flat on the quai Bourbon, Ile Saint-Louis, and he stayed on in Paris returning every September to Cérilly for a holiday until unexpectedly struck down by fever in December 1909. He was taken to the Clinique Velpeau, rue de la Chaise, where he died on 21 December at the age of thirty-five of typhoid complicated by syphiloid meningitis. The body was returned to Cérilly and buried in the town cemetery. Apart from members of the novelist's family and several townspeople, the ceremony was attended by Marcel Ray, Léon-Paul Fargue, Jacques Copeau, Henri Ghéon, Valery Larbaud, Emile Guillaumin and André Gide. [1] Guillaumin gave the oration at the graveside and Gide added a short speech. [2]

(Matériaux d'une théorie du prolétariat, Paris 1919, and quoted by Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe: l'homme, l'ecrivain, p.115.) An advocate of revolutionary syndicalism which rejected cooperation of any kind with the ruling classes, Sorel was motivated in his consistently harsh judgment of Philippe's work ("/.../ cet alambiqueur de mots avait beaucoup de peine à ne pas être gauche quand il voulait être sérieux") less by a desire to be objective than by his indignation that Philippe should count among his friends capitalists like Gide and Larbaud.

1. Fargue, Larbaud and Guillaumin, as well as Francis Jourdain, returned to the Cérilly cemetery on 24 September 1911 for the unveiling of a bust of Philippe by Bourdelle. (See the announcement in Mercure de France, 1 October 1911, p.669). In a letter to Gide (30 July 1910) Larbaud quotes Marcel Ray as complaining that it "ressemble fâcheusement à Napoléon III". (Valery Larbaud, Lettres à Andre Gide, p.14).

2. In his Journal 1889-1939, Gide recounts the death and burial of Charles-Louis Philippe. "Non! non, ce n'était pas la même chose ... Cette fois, celui qui disparaît, c'est un vrai. On comptait sur lui; on s'appuyait sur lui; on l'aimait. Et brusquement il n'est plus là". See pp.278-287, "La Mort de Charles-Louis Philippe". For another account, see Léon-Paul Fargue, Portraits de famille, Paris 1947, pp.73-104.

Charles-Louis Philippe: Some Preliminary Observations.

Despite a formal education at the collège and lycée, Philippe's acquaintance with literature was that of an autodidact. As we have seen, until 1895 he had been studying mathematics with a view to entering the Polytechnique. Only when it became apparent that he was not going to secure employment appropriate to his training did he turn seriously to writing. Throughout his short career he read widely and randomly, the result less of a naturally eclectic taste than the lack of suitable guidance. Philippe's literary education remained incomplete and his appreciation of individual writers was a subjective one. Considerations of form were often secondary and works of literature were good or bad insofar as they corresponded to a personal conception of social morality and were capable of provoking an emotional response from him. His preferences ranged widely enough to encompass both Barrès and Suarès and his tendency to react spontaneously to the very considerable number of authors who made up his reading programme from 1895 retarded the development of a cohesive style in Philippe's own writing. Examination of the novels, especially those written after La Mère et l'enfant (1900), will show an uneasy combination of elements of romantic, naturalist and symbolist technique, a successful manipulation of which Philippe did not always manage.

After a token effort to familiarise himself with Racine, La Fontaine and Pascal (Lettres provinciales) he seemed particularly drawn to romantic prose and poetry; a preference for escapism which is not perhaps surprising considering his youth and his distress at the evaporation of his career

ambitions. Between 1897 and 1900 he read much of Heine's verse and developed a taste for the naïve naturism of Francis Jammes. He admired Michelet's Histoire de France and his correspondence records the enthusiasm with which he read Hugo, Nerval (Sylvie), Stendhal (La Chartreuse de Parme) and Barbey d'Aurevilly (Les Diaboliques). [1.] His interest in the symbolists dates from his earliest days in the capital when he attended Mallarmé's Tuesday evening meetings. While he memorised the lines of the master symbolist, he took a violent dislike to Verlaine's work; a dislike provoked in the main by Philippe's puritanical disapproval of the poet's life style. [2.] He closely followed the career of the Belgian poets Mockel, Elskamp and Ghil and was on intimate terms with Henri Vandeputte.

Among foreign novelists he preferred those who dealt with the social problems of their various countries. His choice, however, was restricted to those whose approach was as subjective as his own and whose style tended to the sentimental. Among the English his favourites were Dickens and Hardy and by 1898 he had read and admired David Copperfield, Oliver Twist and Jude the Obscure. His knowledge of Tolstoy's writing was extensive and he especially appreciated the works

1. See letter to Marcel Ray (27 October 1895), Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.23, December 1965, p.23 and Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.81.

2. See his letter to Ray (Cérilly, 27 June 1895): "Alors tu crois toujours à Verlaine. Je t'avouerai que ce qu'on m'en a dit et ce que j'ai lu de lui m'ont bien dégoûté. L'homme a tous les vices [...] Ces dernières années, c'est un gâteux et un sadique [...] Des vers imbéciles et sales à des femmes de brasserie, où il chante leurs cuisses, leurs baisers. Il remonte dans la pleine enfance." (Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.23, December 1965, p.20).

of the Russian's later 'socially conscious' period exemplified by Resurrection. [1.] It treated with Tolstoy's particular blend of compassion and didacticism that theme of the rehabilitation of a fallen woman which earlier had become almost de rigueur among naturalists. Bubu de Montparnasse develops the same theme and Philippe's combining of naturalistic detail and symbolist vocabulary to develop the relationship between Berthe and Pierre Hardy owes much to Tolstoy's portrayal of Maslova and Prince Nekhlyudov.

For Philippe the concept of social realism was meaningless without the author's sympathy for his created characters. He meant this sympathy to be 'active' in the sense that it be discernible within a literary work and, consequently, that it unambiguously ally the author with his subjects against a common adversary. It was their lack of an overt social commitment which caused Philippe unfairly to dismiss all the naturalist writers as superficial. His criteria for literary judgment based almost entirely on personal moral convictions, his appreciation of Flaubert ignored the writer's stylistic success and concentrated instead on the emotional effect achieved. "Je viens de lire L'Education sentimentale" he wrote to Vandeputte, "[...] mais, c'est à s'en rouler par terre de désespoir." [2.] He criticised both what he saw as Flaubert's impassiveness in the face of human suffering and his reliance upon picturesque detail to achieve effect, and he extended this condemnation to include the entire work of Zola, the Goncourts and the rest of the naturalists. [3.]

1. See letter of 14 January 1900, Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.136.
2. Ibid., Letter of 30 July 1897, p.45.
3. Many of Philippe's friends were understandably distressed at such an arbitrary approach ("Je n'éprouve pas du tout

The most important literary influences on Philippe's development as a writer were the works of Dostoievsky and Nietzsche. He had read all of the Russian's novels that had appeared in translation, reserving special praise for L'Idiot. [1] Nothing suggests, however, that Philippe undertook more than a cursory study of Dostoievsky and it was the general tone of the Russian's work, his religion de la pitié, which influenced Philippe the most by reinforcing his own social convictions. The exact extent of his knowledge of Nietzsche's philosophy is less easy to establish. His overall appreciation, as expressed in his correspondence, was wildly enthusiastic but superficial. It was the immediately perceptible emphasis on physical force and, by implication, inherent cruelty in the human character which especially appealed to Philippe. [2]

le besoin d'être juste envers mes ennemis") to what had after all been one of the most influential movements in nineteenth century literature. Francis Jourdain remarked at the time that "A vrai dire, je le soupçonnais de connaître très imparfaitement ce qu'il rejetait d'un coeur léger; il y avait dans son intransigeance beaucoup d'apriorisme et même un peu de l'entêtement du paysan décidé à ne rien entendre". (Francis Jourdain, Sans remords ni rancune, p.145) Philippe, a dreyfusard, took a more indulgent attitude to Zola after L'Aurore's publication of the open letter to the President of the Republic. "Il est évident que Zola a fait le plus bel acte de sa vie. Il est plus évident encore qu'Esterhazy est coupable". (Letter of 31 May, 1898, Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.90).

1. See letter of 18 December 1897. Lettres de Jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.71.

2. Writing in the Mercure de France (Vol.95, January-February 1912) the critic Jean de Gourmont made the point that Philippe, in common with many of his contemporaries, tended to overestimate the Nietzschean emphasis on brute strength (pp.607-608).

The first mention of the German in his correspondence is found in a letter to Vandeputte dated 31 December 1900. The particular work Philippe had read was Humain trop humain and his reaction to it was rapturous:

> [...] J'ai lu Nietzsche, ô mon beau coeur, et c'est un remède à mes maux, un grand cordial qui me fait très fort. J'ai la crise de moi-même. Je veux être moi-même, avec feu, me réaliser comme un orage qui éclate et avec un peu de sécheresse, comme un coup de tonnerre. Comme ceci doit te paraître étrange, et comme ceci m'eût paru étrange il y a quelques mois, alors que je n'étais qu'un faible enfant. Je deviens un homme maintenant. [1].

If this was Philippe's first recorded acknowledgment of Nietzsche's influence on him, it is clear that he had responded, as André Gide had also done, to the Nietzscheism which was dans l'air in the 1890's before ever actually reading any of the German's work. [2]. His attachment to both Dostoievsky and Nietzsche implies certain contradictions in attitude which Philippe never managed to reconcile. Certainly the Russian's sympathetic portrayal of poverty and suffering strengthened Philippe's own conviction in the moral superiority of his own class and also encouraged the growth of an unhealthy sentimentality in his writing. Insofar as the iniquities of the contemporary social structure provided Philippe with his central theme, although not with his principal motivation for writing, all his work may be said to rest

1. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.146.

2. "Il se produit des changements dans mon caractère. Je deviens homme [...] Je deviens plus ferme et plus volontaire [...] Je dis merde en face aux gens qui me déplaisent [...] Il ne faut pas croire que je sois une bonne petite pâte à tout faire. Je suis un sale oiseau, brutal et méchant". (Letter of 21 July 1898, Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.100) The Nietzschean overtones are unmistakable in these lines written two and a half years before Philippe admitted having read Humain trop humain. Similarly,

on a certain duality. Originally it was a division of society, immediately obvious to the son of a clog maker, into two groups: those who had money and those who had not. Although this financial criterion for determining class distinctions appears in all the works, it is in his early writing, from La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie to La Mère et l'enfant, that Philippe emphasised the incompatibility of the middle and working classes. "J'ai une impression de classe", he admitted in an interview in 1904. "Les écrivains qui m'ont précédé sont tous de classe bourgeoise [...] Je trouve mon âme dans le peuple qui m'entoure [...] Je ne sépare les gens par nationalités mais par classes". [1] This is not, however, the motivating force in the major novels and F.W.J. Hemmings misses the mark when he maintains that "Philippe divided men into two classes: the rich and the poor: and these two classes only". [2]

Philippe's 'Marxist' view of the nature of society was complicated by his reading of Nietzsche which introduced the elements of 'strong' and 'weak'. Although in all cases the bourgeois were placed in the camp of the strong who could, by virtue of their wealth, subjugate the workers, the lower classes were viewed by Philippe as capable of

Gide is not known to have read any of Nietzsche's works before 1898 although the cult of energy and self-abandon in his Nourritures terrestres (1897) owes an obvious debt to the German philosopher. See Renée Lang's observations on this influence in her study André Gide et la pensée allemande (Paris, 1949), p.184.

1. Gil Blas, 13 November 1904.

2. F.W.J. Hemmings, The Russian Novel in France 1884-1914, p.161.

similar exploitation among themselves. His fascination with Nietzsche's philosophy was such that the concept of domination of one group or individual by another lost much of its opprobrium. Philippe never reconciled his desire to be counted among Nietzsche's hommes volontaires with his professed sympathy for the poor and weak. [1.] It is precisely this contradiction that creates the tension marking all the major novels, as one group of characters is set against the other with neither able to claim the undivided sympathy of the author. In Bubu de Montparnasse it is the strength of will of Bubu himself which confronts the saintly submission of Pierre and Berthe and this pattern of interaction between weak and strong is repeated in the relationship of Raphaël with Marie (Marie Donadieu), [2.] of Croquignole with Claude and Angèle (Croquignole) [3.] and to a certain extent of Jean with old Perdrix (Le Père Perdrix).

The dominant impression left by a reading of Philippe's work is his emphasis on human suffering. "J'aime toutes les choses, mais j'aime surtout ce qui souffre", he wrote to Vandeputte in 1897 [4.] and whether it is the victim or the

1. "Mes amis d'ici qui me voient tous les jours savent que je suis un homme fort, avec de la résistance et du courage et que j'ai des volontés furieuses. Il faut que tu le saches aussi, et que je ne suis pas qu'un bon type, mais aussi que je puis commettre des actes de sombre crapulerie, à froid, parce que je l'ai décidé. Et je suis peut-être plus près de Nietzsche que de Dostoïevsky". (Letter of 30 May 1901. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.160.)
2. Fasquelle, Paris 1904.
3. Fasquelle, Paris 1906.
4. Letter dated 11 November. Lettres de Jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.65.

oppressor upon which the author concentrates, the inference to be drawn from all the novels is the same; that the contemporary social order works against the happiness of the greatest number and should be reformed. If, however, Philippe possessed an "impression de classe" it was not one which prompted him to overt political statement or action. Rather he contented himself in portraying a vision of the lower classes as he saw them, relying to achieve his didactic purpose upon the ability to provoke an emotional and sympathetic response from the reading public. If this approach saved Philippe's novels from degenerating into manuals of political propaganda it all too readily exploited that tendency to sentimentalism betrayed in his attachment to Dostoievsky. At its height in La Mère et l'enfant, Philippe's emotional treatment of the theme of suffering is never entirely subdued by his commitment to Nietzsche's cult of the will, and is easily discernible in all the subsequent novels. It creates the figures of the young Parisian girls condemned by their penury to a life of prostitution, the petty office employees whose ambitions are reduced to the expectation of their monthly wage packets and an assortment of others, like old Perdrix, for whom life is a series of hardships leading to suicide. Even in Bubu de Montparnasse, written when Nietzsche's influence on Philippe was strongest, the elements of pity and resignation together with a pseudo-Christian emphasis on personal sacrifice bid strongly for the reader's attention and incline him to agree with Henri Clouard's judgment that "[...] un double malheur charge Philippe: sa sensibilité se corrompait vite en sensiblerie, et il lui arrivait de se battre les flancs". [1]

1. Henri Clouard, Histoire de la littérature française de 1885 à 1914, p.516. Compare Jules Renard's remark

To the extent that Philippe was able to reduce society to the incompatibility of two classes, the theme of poverty was bound to be an essential one. Although only by ignoring the contributions of Hugo, Sue, the Goncourts, Zola and others could it seriously be maintained that Philippe was the "[...] créateur du roman de milieux populaires" and even less that he "[...] introduit le Pauvre dans le roman français", [1] he viewed poverty as the material cause of all suffering. He could not accept Dostoievsky's concept of a 'religion of poverty' which worked towards man's moral betterment by strengthening him through suffering. Philippe died before he could define to his own satisfaction the moral significance of poverty and throughout the novels he is seen hesitating between its total condemnation as degrading to the human spirit and a grudging acceptance of it as something by which man might achieve a measure of dignity through stoic resignation. This ambivalence can be traced through Philippe's development of the closely related theme of labour. Although he occasionally concedes that the discipline of manual work can grace the human condition with some sense of purpose,

> that "Charles-Louis Philippe donne l'impression qu'il nous trompe et que l'humanité ne s'attendrit à ce point". (Quoted by Paul Vernois in "Maupassant, auteur rustique", Travaux de linguistique et de littérature, No. 2, Strasbourg 1964, p.129.) A completely opposite judgment was made by Lucien Jean whose friendship with Philippe prompted him to justify this literary shortcoming in terms of a personal virtue: "[L'inclination] vers les formes élémentaires et douloureuses, quelques esprits superficiels la prirent pour une tendresse excessive, maladive même [...] Il fallut ses livres pour que l'on vît clairement quelle force tendait cette âme douce. Ce sont des pauvres encore qui vivent dans ses livres, et nous aimons cela". (Lucien Jean, "Charles-Louis Philippe", Parmi les hommes, Lausanne 1960, p.230).

1. See S. Kravtchenko's foreword to a pamphlet entitled "Charles-Louis Philippe", being the programme of an exhibition of Philippe's work at the University of Grenoble library. Allier/Grenoble, 1961, pp.3;5.

his major premise is that it constitutes a necessary evil which permits the survival of the labourer. In Bubu de Montparnasse and Croquignole Philippe's attack on the monotony of servile, if steady, employment is especially pointed and intensified by the considerable sympathy directed towards those condemned to it. Even in the posthumous Charles Blanchard, where Philippe deliberately attempted to idealise the working life of his deceased father, the contradiction was apparent. Descriptions of the blissful state of the honest worker alternate with illustrations of the most appalling deprivation. Having tried several times to reconcile the opposites, Philippe abandoned the work and Charles Blanchard, published by the Nouvelle Revue Française in 1913, is the collection of these preparatory sketches.

Despite the assertion by several of his friends that Philippe was a socialist by temperament [1] and certain anarchist tendencies which, encouraged by his reading of Nietzsche, he indulged in the stories for Matin, Philippe's interest in political action was minimal. He had made no attempt to educate himself in political theory, had read neither Marx nor Proudhon and at no time offered his literary services, as Emile Guillaumin was doing in the Bourbonnais, to the developing labour movement. His attachment to the workers was a sentimental and not a doctrinaire one, his primary concern being to achieve an effective aesthetic

1. See Marcel Ray, "L'Enfance et la jeunesse de Charles-Louis Philippe", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.XIV, 1910, p.191. Also Georges Bodard's study, "Charles-Louis Philippe: Souvenirs et impressions", Cahiers du Centre, No.63 (April 1935): "Je ne crois pas qu'il s'occupât véritablement de politique; nous n'en parlions jamais. En revanche, la question sociale l'intéressait beaucoup. Il avait tellement coudoyé la pauvreté et constaté la dureté de la misère, qu'il

representation of them. Any value in his work for advancing the cause of social reform he saw as the result of a successful literary portrait of the people. In 1897 when his friend Louis Lumet, editor of L'Enclos, and J.-G. Prod'homme tried to involve him in setting up a "Théâtre civique" for the edification of the masses, his response was less than enthusiastic. "Pour le moment, /Lumet/ a des projets grandioses: nous allons faire dans plusieurs salles des faubourgs des conférences, des lectures d'éducation du peuple (Michelet, Lamennais, Veuillot, etc ...) /.../ Quant à moi, cela ne m'inspire pas énormément; je suis le mouvement, voilà tout. Peut-être n'est-ce pas en ma faveur, mais j'aimerais beaucoup mieux rester toujours chez moi à penser à ce que je veux écrire". [1].

Naturally opposed to any concept of aristocracy, he was no friend either of the Republic which he regarded as the guarantee of bourgeois privilege. His advice to Charles Max not to attend a public celebration in support of the government is typical of his disdain:

> Je n'irai donc pas y assister et je vous invite à ne faire autant /.../ Qu'est-ce que ça nous fiche à nous le „triomphe de leur République„. Est-ce que ça empêchera les ouvriers de crever de faim? Je ne veux pas m'intéresser à une manifestation en faveur de ces messieurs nos gouvernements qui nous ont sauvés. [2].

désirait ardemment l'amélioration de la classe indigente /.../" (pp.15-16).

1. Letter of 30 May 1897. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.40. The experiment, a variation on the pattern of the universités populaires, amounted to little as the police soon intervened to prohibit the meetings.

2. Letter dated 17 November 1899. See "Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.XIV, 1910, p.243.

He was, however, no revolutionary and one would search his writing in vain to find a call to arms. Although his often moving description of the effects of chronic poverty constitutes an implicit call for reform, his insistence is on a measure of social justice and not the doctrinaire egalitarianism of the Marxists. [1.] Relative differences in wealth were not necessarily evil according to Philippe as long as those lower down the social scale could be guaranteed against any form of want or exploitation arising from an absolute necessity to work. If everyone had enough then those who possessed more would forfeit their ability to cause suffering. Professor Hemmings seriously misjudges this aspect of Philippe's thought and implies that the novelist was also a propagandist. [2.] Although he can with justification compare to that of Dostoievsky Philippe's ability to stimulate pity for the victims of society, he is on much less sure ground in maintaining that "/Philippe/ canalised this flood /of pity/, as the Russian had refrained from doing, to make it turn the dynamos of class strife". [3.] A careful reading of the novels will show that although the occasional reference is made to the middle class oppressors

1. In his Journal (20 January 1902) Gide recalls a remark by Philippe that "Peut-être le sentiment de justice est-il appelé à jouer chez nous le rôle que le pittoresque jouait chez les romantiques". (Journal 1889-1939, p.122).

2. "/Philippe/ was consumed by a violent hatred for the bourgeoisie, a hatred which he exhaled incessantly in his correspondence and his novels". (F.W.J. Hemmings, The Russian Novel in France 1884-1914, pp.147-148. See also pp.61;187.)

3. Ibid., p.155.

they only very rarely make an appearance, especially after La Mère et l'enfant, as viable characters in their own right. The essential conflict comes not from the broad concept of class exploitation but rather is the result of an individual instinct, which ignores class boundaries, of the strong to dominate the weak. Philippe consistently refused to press his writing into the service of any political or social movement, the very idea of a roman à thèse or an art social contradicting his inclination to pure art. His response to an enquête made by Georges Le Cardonnel and Charles Vellay on the social responsibilities of the novelist indicates to what extent Philippe considered literature an essentially private pursuit:

> Le roman m'a toujours semblé une sorte de confession. Il faut d'ailleurs qu'une oeuvre soit l'expression de la vie de l'écrivain. Aussi le cas de Zola, qui à trente ans se fait un système, me paraît monstrueux [...] Je trouve vraiment extraordinaire qu'on ose faire du roman un prétexte d'études sociales ou psychologiques. 1.

André Ruyters, having criticised what he regarded as an over-emphasis on the passive resignation in Philippe's characters, received this reply: "Mon vieux Ruyters, si j'avais traité la prostituée Berthe [Bubu de Montparnasse] et le pauvre

1. See Valery Larbaud, Ce Vice impuni la lecture, pp.298-299. See also Philippe's letter (9 February 1897) to Vandeputte in which he insisted that "L'artiste ne doit pas participer à une école [...] L'artiste est un bon ouvrier qui s'écoute et, dans son coin, avec candeur d'âme, écrit ce qu'il entend". (Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.27) In a letter written the following year he added that "Les livres, on ne les porte pas dans son cerveau, froidement, [...] on les porte dans ses sens, on les écrit avec enthousiasme, et s'il y a une philosophie qui s'en dégage, elle s'en dégage après coup". (15 May 1898, Ibid., p.87).

Perdrix /Le Père Perdrix/ de façon différente, j'eusse fait des livres faux et détestables et cela eût été une chose que nous n'aimons ni l'un ni l'autre et que nous appelons de „l'art social„." [1.]

If, as the leading theorists of the genre maintained, workers' literature demanded the submerging of the novelist's individual identity into some vaguely defined proletarian 'unanimism' then Philippe was a bourgeois writer in the tradition of the nineteenth century. [2.] Pursuing the concept of artistic individualism beyond his general disdain for littérature engagée he wrote to Jean Giraudoux in 1899:

> Nous portons en nous-mêmes notre vérité /.../ Il faut bien connaître les autres, mais /.../ il ne faut pas trop laisser leur vie pénétrer en nous, car alors nous les imiterions. Il faut être soi, vous dis-je. Et la seule manière d'être soi, c'est de se laisser mûrir, tout seul, au soleil, comme un beau fruit d'été". [3.]

1. Letter of December 1902. "Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.XIV, 1910, pp.250-251.

2. See for example Marcel Martinet's article in L'Effort libre, June 1913. "/.../ Nous croyons que l'art ne peut avoir sa fin en soi; il est partie dans l'activité humaine dont il n'est qu'une manifestation; c'est là sa moralité". ("L'Art prolétarien", p.536.) In the same number of L'Effort libre see also Charles Albert's "Un Art du peuple?": "L'art bourgeois, ce fut /.../ l'expression esthétique de l'individualisme bourgeois". (p.105) Jean Richard Bloch, in his "De l'utilité en art et pour en finir avec l'art pour l'art", pursues the same line of argument. "Il y a donc à mon sens, une utilité de l'oeuvre d'art /.../ Je dirai qu'elle consiste à rendre l'homme plus fortement homme, à le mettre sur la voie de lui-même et à lui indiquer /.../ la route où il recontrera ses semblables". (Ibid., p.356).

3. Quoted by Emile Guillaumin in Mon Compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, p.57. See Marcel Ray's letter to Valery Larbaud (24 January 1910): "Ce que /Philippe/ aimait dans le peuple c'étaient les individus et non pas la foule". ("Valery Larbaud-Marcel Ray: Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.313, 1st February 1979, p.159).

This apology for individualism in literature not only gives another indication of Nietzsche's influence on Philippe, but the very style in which it is written also bears an unmistakable resemblance to that of Gide's Nourritures terrestres published two years earlier. Contemporary left wing critics like Charles Albert did not fail to seize upon Philippe's refusal to work "non pas comme artiste, mais comme simple citoyen, comme simple révolutionnaire, à l'enfantement de la Cité nouvelle" as an example of middle class corruption in literature: "Avec une tendresse infinie un Charles-Louis Philippe [...] a célébré le peuple, ses souffrances et ses vertus. Mais ne l'a-t-il pas fait d'un art encore trop marqué des tares de l'art bourgeois et, somme toute, selon certaines formules de la sensibilité bourgeoise?" [1]. Philippe's strength lay in the power of his individual character studies, while his representative types of the village dweller and the poor of the Parisian boulevards often border on caricature. Deliberate magnification of personality traits, although undermining a strict application of social realism, is one effective way of attempting interesting psychological portraits of essentially limited characters. It is perhaps significant that Philippe had dismissed out of hand the work of Zola, the one major novelist of the nineteenth century who had tried, especially in his Germinal, to capture the mass mentality of the proletariat.

Brief mention must be made of Philippe's religious beliefs, as they are closely related to the theme of fatality

1. Charles Albert, "Un Art du peuple?", L'Effort libre, January 1913, p.102.

which unites all his prose work. Although never a practising Catholic beyond his early childhood, he retained a "vague communion sentimentale" with the Christian religion. [1.] The forces of compassion and self-abnegation, reinforced by his reading of Tolstoy and Dostoievsky, are never far from the central conflict in all Philippe's novels and provide a counter-weight to the Nietzschean emphasis on individualism. Although not overtly anticlerical in the mould of Eugène Le Roy, Philippe rejected both the dogma and the hierarchy of the organised Church. Given his refusal to fashion his thought after any particular school and the belief in a Gidean concept of sincerity it is not surprising that he chose to retain his freedom in religious matters. Apart from one or two references alleged to have been made by Philippe about a possible conversion, nothing is to be found in his novels, correspondence or journalism which suggests that he contemplated such a step. [2.]

"Je crois à un Dieu qui me persécute [...]" he wrote to Vandeputte in 1897. "A quoi bon faire quoi que ce soit, du moment que j'ai été mis au monde pour le malheur". [3.] If Christian values are discernible in Philippe's thought, his conception of God is of that of the Old Testament. It is a deity on the whole indifferent to the injustices it

1. See Jean Vaudal's preface to Le Père Perdrix, Stock, Paris 1948.

2. In his study "Charles-Louis Philippe : Souvenirs et impressions", Georges Bodard relates the following remark which the village priest claims Philippe made to him: "Détrompez-vous, M.le curé, je suis plus près de vous que vous ne semblez le croire, j'en suis même très près". (Cahiers du Centre, No.63, April 1935, p.26.)

3. Letter of 30 July. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.46.

itself has created by dividing men into rich and poor. When God does intervene it is to punish and aggravate the suffering of the weak. To the extent that a metaphysical presence does make its way into the novels, Philippe's fatalism is almost total. This pessimism is most noticeable in La Mère et l'enfant and Le Père Perdrix where the characters submit to the inevitability of injustice and suffering without offering even a token resistance. The divine element does not however play an overriding role in Philippe's work and his concept of fatality is not as absolute as certain critics have maintained. It is to misjudge a fine but important shade in the balance of the novels to claim, as Daniel Mornet does, that "[Philippe] a écrit l'histoire de pauvres gens, victimes de la misère et de l'effort sans fin, des paysans du Bourbonnais [...] ou de brutes instinctives et d'épaves roulant dans la misère parisienne". [1] The general tone of the novels is undoubtedly bleak and the majority of characters are seen to act in compliance with forces beyond their control. This is as true of the prostitute Berthe in Bubu de Montparnasse as it is of Marie Donadieu, the senile Perdrix or the workers chained to the routine of office life in Croquignole. There exists, however, a conflict between submission and the exercise of free will which provides the force motivating all the novels after La Mère et l'enfant. If the characters in this first work suffer in mute silence, from Bubu de Montparnasse onward some make appreciable progress towards the goal of the Nietzschean homme volontaire. Philippe does not number

1. Daniel Mornet, Histoire de la littérature et de la pensée françaises contemporaines: 1870-1934, Paris 1927, p.26.

resignation among the human virtues and reserves his greatest approbation not for those who suffer but for those, like Bubu and Croquignole, who consciously try to determine the course their lives will follow. Their accomplishment is a very limited one --- Bubu never escapes the squalor of the hôtels meublés and disease of the Paris slums and Croquignole's unexpected inheritance is quickly squandered and he is confronted again with the mindless monotony of an office job --- but Philippe makes his point that the victory of fatality need not be total. Certain groups and individuals however are indeed singled out and seen to be entirely subjugated to a higher, metaphysical will.

In the final analysis, Philippe does not perceive much hope for improvement in the conditions of life of the lower classes. A closer examination of the novels will show to what extent his concept of the immutability of the divine will and the almost insuperable power of social fatality combine to produce a commentary on the human situation which is extremely pessimistic. This must help account for his lukewarm endorsement of socialism and marxism. By nature man, regardless of class, appears to Philippe to be just as willing to exploit his fellows as he is to assist them and the social order is static, determined both from within and without, and allows no such historical progression towards a perfectible end as the Marxists envisage. An emphasis on descriptive realism provides the basis for all the novels but only by manipulating the interpretation to an unacceptable degree can this be construed as socialist realism. [1]

1. See Georg Lukács, "Sehnsucht und Form: Charles-Louis Philippe", Die Seele und die Formen, Neuwied & Berlin 1971, pp.133-154. The essay was written in 1910.

Charles-Louis Philippe: The Novels.

La Mère et l'enfant.

Following the two composite works Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour (1897) and La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie (1898), La Mère et l'enfant (1900) was Philippe's first full-length novel. The original edition however, published in Paris by the Bibliothèque de la Plume, consisted of barely half the manuscript which Philippe had initially submitted to the Mercure de France. It was only after the Mercure's rejection of this full version that he decided to edit it. Although Philippe himself left no account of why the original was declined, comparison of a 'complete' edition published by the Nouvelle Revue Française in 1911 with the edition of 1900 makes certain conjecture possible. [1] Of the eight original chapters only the four dramatic, or 'tense', ones were retained; namely, those chapters which, however slowly, advanced the action by concentrating on class conflict, or local village crises. The deleted passages consisted of lengthy and static exposition on maternal love and filial devotion --- just those passages in fact which drew most hostile criticism to the 1911 edition. It seems plausible to assume that the Mercure turned down the manuscript, suggesting to Philippe deletions which would make the work palatable to a wider public. Whether it was the Mercure which made the suggestions or Philippe himself who took a

1. A list of the differences between the two texts is provided in an article written for the N.R.F. by Marcel Ray in 1911. See "La Mère et l'enfant", Nouvelle Revue Française, Vol.6, July-December 1911, p.202.

fresh look at his novel, the altered form was published in 1900. Marcel Ray, who was in close contact with Philippe during his friend's brief career, declared himself satisfied that Philippe had considered this earlier edited version the definitive one. [1.]

Gide was less sure that Philippe had been entirely happy with the result and thought it more likely that he conceded the deletions in order to make publication commercially more attractive to the editor. [2.] There is no verifiable evidence to support Emile Guillaumin's conjecture based upon the purely financial considerations which every proletarian writer had to take into account: "Peut-etre Philippe, en laissant de côté tant de chapitres [...] a-t-il été guidé surtout par le souci de ne pas dépenser ou de ne pas s'endetter trop... Il publiait

1. "J'ai la certitude absolue que Philippe considérait cette édition comme définitive". ("La Mère et l'enfant", Nouvelle Revue Française, Vol.6, July-December 1911, p.203) According to Ray, Philippe kept him well informed of every stage in the composition of his novels. "Philippe avait l'habitude de me lire ses livres chapitre par chapitre, à mesure qu'il les écrivait". (Ibid., p.202) In the same article Ray admits, however, that Philippe told him in the Spring of 1898 that his intention was to write a book "sur ma mère"; an intention underlined by his own correspondence of the period. Given that the chapters deleted in the La Plume edition were precisely those devoted to the mother, Ray's persistent opposition to Gide's proposal remains puzzling.

2. See, for example, Gide's letter to Henri Bachelin (Bruges, May 1911) where he comments that Philippe omitted the sections from the 1900 edition because he "[...] craignait d'alourdir son récit." (Michael L. Rowland, André Gide's Tribute to Charles-Louis Philippe", Romance Notes, xiii, 1971-72, p.209.)

à ses frais, et un petit livre coûte moins qu'un gros [...] Moi, cette raison terre à terre me semble très plausible". [1] Gide felt strongly enough that Philippe had been coerced into making what changes he did that he decided a second edition should be published based on the full original manuscript. This he accomplished in 1911, two years after the author's death, depite stiff opposition from several of Philippe's friends; notably, Francis Jammes, Francis Jourdain and Marcel Ray. As we have seen Ray's opposition was prompted by his personal conviction about the author's intentions and in this he was seconded by Francis Jourdain who resented what he considered Gide's arbitrary manner: "Comment Gide pouvait-il hésiter à comprendre que nous étions les seuls [...] à respecter la volonté expresse du mort?" [2] Whatever the merits of the respective arguments, it was Gide's full 1911 edition which provided the model for all subsequent

1. Letter to Valery Larbaud, dated 18 June 1911, Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, Roger Mathé ed., Paris 1969, p.106.

2. Francis Jourdain, Sans remords ni rancune, p.193. Ray's opposition represents an erosion of the unqualified trust in Gide's literary judgment to which he admitted in a letter to Larbaud just after Philippe's death: "[A propos des] projets de Gide au sujet de la publication des mss. de Philippe. Je suis d'avis de tout laisser à Gide tant qu'il aura quelque chose à publier [...] Il me semble que Gide a servi jusqu'ici la mémoire de Philippe avec trop de clairvoyance et de dévouement pour qu'on ne lui laisse pas pleine liberté et pleine responsabilité [...] Gide m'écrit lui-même qu'il craint d'avoir l'air de „monopoliser„; je trouve ce monopole extrêmement bienfaisant [...]". ("Valery Larbaud-Marcel Ray: Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.313, 1st February 1979, p.173.)

French editions and translations and it is to this version that all references in the present thesis are made. [1.]

Work began on La Mère et l'enfant in the early Summer of 1898. In outlining the plan of the novel to Vandeputte, Philippe signalled what was to become its dominant theme: maternal love. "Je vais commencer, ce soir sans doute, mon nouveau livre. Ce sera l'histoire de maman. On m'y verra tout petit, alors que maman me faisait téter, m'apprenait à sourire, à marcher, à parler, en un mot: alors qu'elle m'apprenait à faire les premières actions de la vie". [2.]

Apart from divulging the theme, Philippe's letter to Vandeputte was couched in language which also hinted at the retrospective, excessively sentimental tone that would dominate the novel. [3.]

1. Excluding the publication of La Plume and Gide's 1911 version, La Mère et l'enfant appeared in the following editions: Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, Gallimard (Paris) 1918, 1920, 1932, 1950, 1962, 1971; M. Rivière (Paris) 1911; Crépin-Leblond (Moulins) 1937; Editions des jeunes amis du livre (Tours) 1959; Le Livre de Poche (Paris) 1971. A German edition (Mutter und Kind) was published by Egon Fleischel (Berlin) 1913 and a Spanish one (La Madre y el niño) by Ediciones Iman (Buenos Aires) 1942. A Yiddish translation (no place) appeared in 1951 and the novel was also translated into Japanese and appeared in one volume with La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie, Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour, Croquignole and Chroniques du Canard Sauvage, (Tokyo) no date.

2. Letter of 31 May 1898, Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.90.

3. Philippe had originally intended to entitle the novel La Passion maternelle.

A first person narrative, addressed on occasion directly to the reader and "maman", the chronology runs from the narrator's birth to his twentieth year. There is no plot, but rather a succession of tableaux depicting the various stages of his development and which are literary transpositions of the author's own experience. Philippe never made any secret of the autobiographical source of all his novels and in the description of village life in La Mère et l'enfant he did not think it necessary even to camouflage the identity of the various townspeople. Events drawn from his childhood and adolescence provide the dramatic framework around which is developed the bond between mother and child. The drowning of the narrator's friend Auguste and his own close escape, the description of the bone disease which the child suffers at the age of five, his boredom and persecution by masters at the lycée and, having received his certificate, his failure to find a suitable position, are all incidents familiar to those acquainted with Philippe's early years. [1.] The novel divides into two roughly equal parts; the first four chapters are centred on the idyll of the mother and child while the last three recount their separation while he is away at school, his attempts to find employment and the ultimate departure for Paris to take up his clerkship at 3fr.75 a day.

The purpose of its composition is freely admitted in the opening pages of the novel itself: "Et ce livre, maman, je l'écris pour que tes mains le touchent, pour que tes yeux

1. For discussion of the extent to which Philippe transposed to his novels characters and events from his childhood see Jacques Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, pp.21-67.

le lisent, et pour qu'il plaise à ton coeur". [1]. Given this consciously exploited nostalgia it is not surprising that the book's most serious flaw is a cloying sentimentalism. It is at its worst in the opening pages where the author loses himself in lyric fantasy. This is a danger which presents itself immediately to an author who has attempted to follow a child's development from the moment of its birth and chosen a first person narrator to relate the story. The opening years are covered by the use of a necessary literary pretence. The narrator ascribes to himself emotions and even thoughts of which it is extremely doubtful an infant is capable in the first instance but, granted that possibility, reflections which it is certain could not be recalled subsequently. Later stages in the boy's life are anchored in the author's own conscious memories of his childhood. It was Philippe's reconstruction of Cérilly, both its buildings and its inhabitants, that made up the petite ville in La Mère et l'enfant. He also made use of his mother's reminiscences to supply details he himself had overlooked. [2].

The first chapter, however, remains a purely imaginative construction. There is evidence to suggest that he drew

1. La Mère et l'enfant, p.30. See Philippe's letter to his mother seven years after the novel was published in which he recalls the period of its composition: "Tu me dis, ma chère maman, que quand j'étais petit et que je souffrais, tu souffrais avec moi. Tu sais bien que je t'aime davantage pour tout cela. Quand j'écrivais La Mère et l'enfant je me le rappelais avec amour. Il y a longtemps, je puis dire toujours, tu es pour moi ce que j'ai le plus précieux au monde". (Letter of 2 May 1907, Lettres à sa mere, Paris 1928, pp.44-45.)

2. See Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe, l'homme, l'écrivain, p.94 and Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.98.

inspiration and gleaned various specific details from observing the wife of his close friend Lucien Jean [1.] and her care for her small children. [2.] Marguerite Audoux went so far as to claim, quite reasonably, that the Dieudonné household provided the entire inspiration for the novel: "Détrompez-vous [...] si Philippe avait connu l'affection d'une mère, il n'eût jamais écrit ce livre. La bonté, la douceur, la tendresse maternelles qu'il ne connaissait pas, lui furent révélées chez son ami Dieudonné, dont la femme avait une adorable petite fille". [3.] The power of this temptation to which Philippe succumbed to dwell upon and sentimentalise the past may be properly gauged when one considers that it triumphed completely over that Nietzschean

1. The pseudonym of Lucien Dieudonné.

2. See Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe: l'homme, l'écrivain, p.94 and Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.98.

3. Quoted by Albert Fournier in his article "Charles-Louis Philippe: Cinquante ans après sa mort", Europe, no.377, Paris, September 1960, p.7. This comment must be seen in the light of the mutual hostility that existed between Marguerite Audoux and Philippe's mother and sister in Cérilly. Mme Philippe was jealous of her son's entirely innocent affection for this sempstress-novelist and even maintained that it was Philippe and not Audoux who had written the highly successful Marie-Claire. After Philippe's death she complained in a letter to André Gide that "Mme Audoux me paraît avoir été la femme maudite dans la vie de mon pauvre enfant [...] Dans son article ["Souvenirs", Nouvelle Revue Française, vol.3, 1910] elle ne parle que d'elle-même, et comme mon fils l'attendait le dimanche, elle parle aussi de „fille publique„ [...] Je sais bien que mon fils était très bon, mais il n'allait pas jusqu'à être l'esclave de cette couturière." (Quoted by Marcel Ray in a letter to Valery Larbaud, 18 April 1910, "Valery Larbaud-Marcel Ray: Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.313, 1st February 1979, p.188).

element of fermeté which served in subsequent novels to counterbalance his tendency to the maudlin. It will be remembered that it was to this same summer of 1898 when he first began work on La Mère et l'enfant that his first enthusiastic response to Nietzsche can also be traced.

Examples of overwriting abound; passages which, although undoubtedly sincere, are embarrassing in their degree of naïveté. Philippe has progressed little beyond the facile emotionalism which marked the two earlier volumes of nouvelles --- Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour and La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie --- and which had offended critics like Louis de Saint-Jacques of La Plume. Even Rachilde, one of the founders of the Mercure de France, who subsequently became one of Philippe's most uncompromising supporters had found in Quatre Histoires "[...] images charmantes [mais] un peu cherchées [...]". [1] Saint-Jacques' verdict on these early works can be applied with equal justification to the overwhelming sentimentality of La Mère et l'enfant; "[...] Avec M. Philippe, tout est pur, doux, joli, ailé, blanc et charmant. On finit par être las de ces sucreries trop fréquentes, et l'on demande avec impatience d'autres gammes de saveurs". [2] An account of the child's first attempt to mimic the sounds of the farm animals he hears around him is typical of this

1. Mercure de France, Vol.23, August 1897, p.342. See also her articles on Le Père Perdrix (Vol.45, February 1903, pp.472-473) and Marie Donadieu (Vol.52, December 1904, pp.727-728).

2. La Plume, 1st February 1899, p.118. Compare remarks by Jacques Le Brun on what he considers Philippe's "véritable rhétorique de la tendresse"; namely, the repetition of such qualitative adjectives as délicat, doux, exquis, gentil, charmant, etc. ("La Tendresse dans le style; La Mère et l'enfant", Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, bulletin no.23, December 1965, p.29.)

characteristic in Philippe's early style:

> [...] Il y a surtout les petits veaux que l'on aime parce qu'ils sont des enfants. On m'apprit à les connaître. Lorsqu'on sait imiter les bêtes, on les connaît bien mieux.
> --- Comment fait le petit l'âne? --- Hi han!
> --- Le petit veau? --- Meu eu eu ---
> --- La Poule? --- Kate kadette!
> [...] Je percevais toutes sortes de choses dans la vie. J'avais quinze mois et j'étais fort. [1].

What one contemporary critic called Philippe's gift to "parler enfant" [2]. invariably degenerates into a self indulgence in nostalgia which, while regrettable, is understandable in the first novel of a young provincial writer exiled in the capital. The most ordinary daily occurrences, when subjected to the narrator's regret for his lost boyhood, assume a cloying, romantic significance. Even the child's return from the village school each afternoon is transformed into an idyllic still life of mutual devotion:

> A quatre heures un quart je rentre à la maison. J'ouvre la porte: Bonjour maman! Elle est assise, je l'embrasse et nous nous regardons longtemps pour rattraper le temps perdu. [3].

1. La Mère et l'enfant, Paris 1911, p.25.

2. See Mercure de France, June 1900 which contains a short, unsigned review of La Mère et l'enfant. "Je croyais qu'il n'y avait qu'Eugène Demolder, le grand écrivain, qui eût cette puissance de parler enfant avec cette sûreté de ton et cette entière pureté d'intention". (p.756).

3. La Mère et l'enfant, p.52. André Suarès, with a work on Dostoievski to his name, rejected all suggestions that such lachrymose sentimentality had any connection with the Russian's concept of bonté. See his letter to André Gide (10 July 1911): "Je suis bien déçu de La Mère et l'enfant. Je ne sais rien qui soit plus loin de Dostoïevski". (André Gide-André Suarès, Correspondance: 1908-1920, Paris 1963, p.58).

At times the images employed to convey the mother-child bond appear so incongruous as to suggest a certain influence from the symbolist poets who constituted much of Philippe's early reading. "Chantez, joli coeur de la mère, comme un oiseau perché sur une branche, le clair avenir qui s'étend de vos yeux, qui coule, qui brille, et qui est un ruisseau s'en allant à la rivière!" [1]. On one notorious occasion Philippe appears to lose all sense of measure and the discipline of a balanced style is sacrificed completely to lyric sentimentalism. Although the passage is long, it is here reproduced in its entirety as representative of the least controlled phase of Philippe's developing style. The narrator evokes the image of his mother where, in a dizzying succession of metaphor and simile, she is compared respectively to the "Bon Dieu", a citadel, a warrior and St. Georges.

> N'est-ce pas, il y a le Bon Dieu du monde, mais une mère c'est le Bon Dieu de la maison.
>
> Mais surtout, maman, tu étais ma citadelle. Magnifique et calme tu te tiens debout sur la colline et ton enfant n'a pas peur lorsqu'il va dans la vallée. Pourtant tu n'es pas une forteresse aux grands murs et compliquée pour la défense, non, et tu n'as pas cet air grondant des remparts pleins de canons. Mais tu te dresses sur la colline, robuste et grave comme un guerrier, et assurée. L'on voit que tu es là et l'on se dit: C'est là-haut celle qui domine la campagne et qui garde son petit contre les méchants. Je me rappelle encore qu'il y a dans notre église un grand Saint-Georges à l'épée auprès d'une cathédrale. Il me semble que tu portes dans tes mains la forte épée du grand Saint. Et moi, cathédrale,

1. La Mère et l'enfant, p.21. Compare Philippe's comment about the fatalism of the chronically poor: "La résignation des pauvres gens s'étend sous le ciel comme une bête blessée et regarde doucement les choses dont elle ne peut point jouir [.../]" (Ibid., p.84).

> je laisse chanter les petits Jésus
> de mon coeur: le mal ne peut pas
> venir lorsque veille le grand Saint
> Georges. [1].

Despite the overwriting which mars most of La Mère et l'enfant there are to be found several passages where Philippe's lyricism is balanced by a keener concern for vraisemblance. Chapter Three, devoted to an account of the infection of the jaw suffered by the boy, merits note. Here Philippe is successful both in recalling his own memories of the illness and in creating a credible and moving impression of the monotony of pain as experience by a child. The subjectivity of the boy's experience merges with the universal nature of pain itself. A subtler use than in preceding chapters of that somewhat incongruous imagery linking Philippe's style to the symbolists here succeeds in creating both forceful and dignified description:

> Un jour succède à l'autre pendant
> qu'une douleur succède à une autre
> douleur. Voici les jours noirs qui
> naissent avec un matin fatigué. Huit
> heures et la soupe sont tristes comme
> un remède à ceux qui n'ont pas d'appétit.
> Neuf heures, dix heures, onze heures,
> la Douleur habite votre cerveau, votre
> mâchoire, vos tempes et votre sang.
> Vous n'êtes plus vous, cet enfant aux
> regards et aux idées, car la Douleur
> vous bouche les yeux et remplace vos
> idées. Et midi, en vous offrant ses
> bons plats de campagne, vous fait
> souffrir encore. Enfin l'après-midi
> s'étend comme une plaine de sable où
> l'on est perdu avec l'Ennui, avec le
> Soir et avec la Mort. [2].

Although Philippe was still a generally unknown author and this first novel attracted little critical attention,

1. La Mère et l'enfant, p.33.
2. Ibid., pp.57-58.

it is surprising to what extent those critics who did record their impressions indulged the sentimentalism of what Hugues Lapaire termed "ce bréviaire de l'amour filial [...]". [1.] One can discount the totally uncritical approach taken by certain of Philippe's friends in their eulogies following the author's death in 1909. Only loyalty to the memory of his dead friend could have led Valery Larbaud, for example, to this conclusion about the novel: "[...] La Mère et l'enfant, cette pure idylle de l'amour maternel, livre unique au monde". [2.] Emile Guillaumin undoubtedly allowed personal sentiment to cloud his literary judgment as well when he referred to the work as "[...] cette autobiographie délicieuse et triste qui est à mon avis un morceau parfait". [3.] While Philippe was yet at the beginning of his career his closest friend, Lucien Jean, recognised the fundamental emotionalism in his style. [4.] He refused to recognise it as a shortcoming, however, and in the contrived images and

1. Hugues Lapaire, "La Mère de Charles-Louis Philippe", Portraits Berrichons, Paris 1927, p.178.

2. See the text of a memorial lecture given by Larbaud on 27 April 1911 at the Hôtel de Ville in Moulins. ("Charles-Louis Philippe", Ce Vice impuni, la lecture, pp.284-311). See also the flattering article by another friend, the Comtesse de Noailles, "La Mère et l'enfant", Nouvelle Revue Française, 15 February 1910, pp.162-168.

3. Emile Guillaumin, "Un Artiste de la douleur et de la bonté: Charles-Louis Philippe", La Revue hebdomadaire, 30 September 1911, p.648.

4. In his evaluation of La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie, Jean had rendered the following judgment which applies to all of Philippe's subsequent work, and especially La Mère et l'enfant: "C'est que l'oeuvre de M. Philippe révèle une âme extraordinairement ardente [...] Avant d'analyser et de juger, il aime, il hait passionnément". (Lucien Jean, "Charles-Louis Philippe", Parmi les hommes, Lausanne 1960, p.233).

laboured simplicity of the writing saw a style "[...] si savoureux, si spontané, que pas un écrivain ne pourra lire une page de Philippe sans éprouver le plaisir physique du métier, de l'ouvrage réussi". [1.]

The almost unqualified enthusiasm of more impartial critics, however, must surely be an indication to what extent literary circles at the turn of the century were willing to embrace a new idealism, however maudlin and retrograde, after the pessimistic dogma of the naturalist years. A review by Gustave Coquiot following the publication of La Mère et l'enfant is representative of most contemporary criticism of this novel. Coquiot distinguishes himself by singling out for praise passages of the most dubious literary quality. He finds to his taste examples both of Philippe's affected simplicity in trying to see through the eyes of his child narrator ("[...] J'aime surtout les petits cochons roses, parce qu'ils ont l'air d'être en jambon") as well as passages employing embarrassingly awkward metaphor ("Il y a le boeuf si tranquille que l'on dirait que le boeuf est le mari et que la vache est la femme"). Coquiot ends his review with an expression of "[...] la gratitude que nous gardons tous à Charles-Louis Philippe de tant de bonheur dans la recherche de la beauté". [2.]

Maurice Beaubourg's similarly uncritical welcome for La Mère et l'enfant in La Revue blanche also seems based on several of its least convincing sections. One brief comment, however, does suggest that the novel's often

1. Lucien Jean, Parmi les hommes, p.230.
2. La Plume, 1st September 1900, pp.559-560.

laboured simplicity did not go entirely unnoticed. "Charles-Louis Philippe [...] a l'air de penser un peu trop [...] malgré tout ce que je reconnais de beauté, d'émotion et de sincérité dans son oeuvre [...]". [1.] La Mère et l'enfant drew its harshest comment from Michel Arnauld in an article he wrote for La Revue blanche in 1901. Although he recognised in the work "une exquise fraîcheur d'enfance" he condemned what he saw as a "certaine mièvrerie maladive, et ce culte du pauvre qui ressemble assez mal au viril amour de la pauvreté". [2.] J. Ernest-Charles was less severe in his judgment although he criticised the novel for its element of "préciosité" and "sentimentalité". Like Beaubourg he was prepared, however, to forgive these faults in view of the sincerity of the author's intentions. "Mais comme nous supporterions difficilement ses affectations si nous ne sentions la sincérité profonde de son inspiration!" [3.] In his woefully inaccurate volume on Philippe, Louis Lanoizelée suggested that the lyric description of the child's home life was the result of Philippe overcompensating for the decidedly prosaic character of his own family:

> Charles-Louis Philippe a beaucoup souffert parce que ses parents n'étaient pas à la mesure de l'image qu'il avait tracée d'eux [...] Il avait un intense besoin de les embellir, de les magnifier [...] Il aurait voulu ne pas avoir à les juger. Hélas! ils étaient bâtis comme la plupart des

1. La Revue blanche, Vol.22, May-August 1900, pp.393-394.
2. Ibid., January-April 1901, pp.393-394.
3. La Grande Revue, 10 August 1911, pp.617-624.

> paysans du Centre, que la terre ingrate a modelés et qui sont durs pour eux-mêmes et pour les autres. Toute vie intérieure leur est inconnue. [1].

Throughout the criticism generated by Philippe's novels and the works of the other proletarian writers examined by the present thesis can be noticed this recurring tendency among reviewers writing for the large bourgeois publications not to take the working class writers seriously. Although willing to review their work --- and often review it extremely favourably --- a number of contemporary critics were unwilling to judge it by the same criteria as they applied to 'traditional' middle class literature. Rules of style and form were relaxed in order to admit what they regarded as lesser art, but art which at least had the virtue of reflecting an emerging social force which gave no signs of abating. It seems a paradox that such critics should be in apparent agreement, if for different reasons, with committed theorists of the proletarian movement like Charles Albert and Marcel Martinet who also called for new aesthetic criteria to apply to this new literature. [2]. This desire to separate working class writing from the existing tradition did not serve the best interest of the genre itself, as it encouraged the view that proletarian involvement in literature was less an artistic than a sociological phenomenon. It made the value of such works as La Mère et l'enfant contingent on a measurable span of time. Once the social conditions changed which had developed it proletarian writing would cease, like

1. Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe: l'homme, l'ecrivain, p.66.

2. See Marcel Martinet, "L'Art prolétarien", L'Effort libre, June 1913, pp.528-554 and Charles Albert, "Un Art du peuple?", Ibid., pp.101-109.

workers' poetry in the 1840's and the work of the regionalists, to have any connection with literary evolution and would be interesting only as an historical fossil.

Philippe himself was not unaware of the sentimental exaggerations in his first novel. In a letter (11 November 1903) to an unidentified friend he explained this flaw and suggested that he was conscious of it at the time of writing La Mère et l'enfant:

> Nous avons été murés comme des pauvres et, parfois, lorsque la Vie entrait chez nous elle portait un bâton. Nous n'avons eu comme ressource que de nous aimer les uns les autres. C'est pourquoi, j'écris toujours plus tendre que ma tête ne me le commandait. [1]

We have already noted to what extent Philippe depended upon the repetition of certain adjectives to establish atmosphere. [2] If this is true of the picturesque presentation of the mother-child relationship, it also applies to the theme of material poverty always present in his novels. In La Mère et l'enfant Philippe was much less successful than he would be in Bubu de Montparnasse or Le Père Perdrix in developing the theme by showing the effects of poverty on the individual characters. In this first novel he preferred to make his point by recurring statements of fact. He frequently repeats that the family is destitute and the reader is expected to accept this at face value. The myths regarding the penury of Philippe's

1. "Deux lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 April 1910, p.153. Guillaumin suggests that for similar reasons Philippe was embarrassed by the Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour: "[...] Ce livre de début dont l'auteur ne parlait jamais et qu'il regrettait même d'avoir publié", ("Un Artiste de la douleur et de la bonté: Charles-Louis Philippe", La Revue hebdomadaire, 30 September 1911, p.646

2. Supra, n.1. p.133.

own childhood become comprehensible in the light of the emphasis he is trying hard to establish here. In the details given of the household and its daily routine, however, no supporting anecdotes are given to verify the statements. The family's means are indeed modest but they lack none of the essentials, and compared to the peasants of Emile Guillaumin's Vie d'un simple or Zola's La Terre the mother and child live in relative ease.

As the novel develops Philippe touches on certain 'social' topics to which these references to poverty provide an introduction. If the emphasis eventually shifts away from exclusive description of the mother-son idyll the general tone remains surchargé. Two experiences from his own childhood and adolescence provide Philippe with the base from which to launch an attack on the disparities in contemporary French society. His encounters both with provincial doctors and with the local landowner encouraged him to view the world in terms of a simple duality: the incompatibility of the rich and the poor. An inclination---discernible in varying degrees in all his novels---for creating particularised exaggerated types Philippe inherited from the romantics, and La Mère et l'enfant is peopled with 'flat' characters. They are good or evil according to whether they form part of the impoverished village community or the ranks of the bourgeois exploiters. Apart from this concept of social fatality Philippe does not discount the power of divine oppression. In contrast to the later novels in which the metaphysical element is negligible, La Mère et l'enfant harbours a stern and arbitrary God in the Old Testament mould. Devoid of any suggestion of mercy or salvation he demands, and receives, total submission from the people to their social lot. He

appears not only indifferent to the injustice he causes but also on occasion whimsical. The image of a pagan Dieu trompeur who delights in taunting his creatures recurs in the work. Regarding the nature of divine justice the narrator comments on the drowning of his friend Auguste:

> Dieu est un trompeur. Voyez-vous ce petit Auguste, il le pétrit avec une chair blanche et lui donne un coeur malade pour que sa mère lui fasse prendre des médicaments. Elle ne craint plus rien lorsqu'il a bu ses potions. Et un jour, alors qu'on l'a soigné et qu'on espère, Dieu met la mort dans une fontaine pour attirer le petit enfant. [1].

The same lack of moderation which produced the inflated description of the mother prompts Philippe's pragmatic generalisations about country physicians. Lacking the necessary subtlety for satire his observations are reduced to the level of cynicism.

> Il y a des étudiants en médecine qui s'amusent à Paris et qui étudient afin d'être docteurs. Et puis ils sont riches et s'établissent dans un coin de province où ils doivent guérir les malades [...] Ils courent un peu les filles, ils chassent et ce sont des bons vivants. Ils parcourent la campagne et font leur métier pour augmenter leurs revenus. [2].

The particular gentleman who attempts to treat the narrator's jaw infection is seen as no exception and is dismissed with similar heavyhanded judgment. "C'était un gros bourgeois de province qui mangeait, chassait et buvait et visitait les malades avec un vieux reste de science qu'il rapporta de Paris". [3].

1. La Mère et l'enfant, p.48.
2. Ibid., p.60.
3. Ibid., p.58. That the factual basis for Philippe's observations was sound seems likely. For an assessment of the standard of the medical profession in France between 1871 and 1914, see Theodore Zeldin, France 1848 - 1945, vol.1, p.23.

The weaknesses in Philippe's form are most evident in the chapter dealing with the narrator's attempts to secure a position appropriate to his lycée education. Philippe's own memories of his frustrated efforts in the summer of 1894 were apparently not far enough in the past to prevent a series of petulant outbursts about the insensitivity of influential members of the local bourgeoisie and the injustices of contemporary educational policy as applied to the working class. The oppressive irony of the passages relating to M. Gaultier, a local landowner whose patronage the narrator seeks to help him find employment, succeeds almost in alienating that sympathy for the young man that Philippe has been cultivating in the reader:

> Immobiles dans notre maison, les yeux braqués vers un château, nous attendions une grande grâce, pareils à ceux qui prient et croient en Dieu. Nous attendions que les riches prissent en pitié les pauvres /.../ Si mes mains sont vides M. Gaultier comprendra que j'en souffre et que je devrais travailler au lieu de manger le pain de mon père. Nous attendions, dis-je, que les riches prissent en pitié les pauvres. [1]

That Philippe had chosen first person narrative for La Mère et l'enfant could only encourage an inclination to make direct appeals to the reader. This tendency culminates in his attacks on those responsible for the education and welfare of the workers. This responsibility lies in the hands of the bourgeois

1. La Mère et l'enfant, p.163. The model for M. Gaultier was a certain M. Bignon, a wealthy landowner in Theneuille. "C'est un homme d'une quarantaine d'années qui porte la barbe. Il est conseiller général de l'Allier, lié d'amitié avec les Préfets et les hommes politiques". (Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.67.)

who, by Philippe's definition, oppose the interests of the poor.

> Vous avez créé des bourses dans les lycées et collèges pour que les fils des ouvriers deviennent pareils à vous. Et lorsqu'ils sont bacheliers comme vous, vous les abandonnez dans leurs villages ... Et cela démontre que si l'on est fils d'ouvrier il ne faut pas s'élever au-dessus de sa classe. [1.]

The extremism to which Philippe was tempted by his division of society along strict class lines gives La Mère et l'enfant an often clumsy didactic purpose. This tendency to social, and by implication political, propaganda was in direct opposition to the author's expressed dislike of all forms of romans à these. [2.] It also revealed an inclination to open revolt not found elsewhere in Philippe's work. His simplistic interpretation of injustice is transformed in his subsequent novel Bubu de Montparnasse by the admission that the fundamental division in human society is between weak and strong and that exploitation thrives within the proletariat itself.

1. La Mère et l'enfant, p.166.

2. Supra, n.1. p.120.

Bubu de Montparnasse.

It was Bubu de Montparnasse, Philippe's novel about the Parisian demi-monde of prostitution and crime, which did most to extend his reputation in France and abroad. Although many of the notices which followed the appearance of Bubu in 1901 were mere announcements of the novel's publication, of all the proletarian fiction produced during the twenty-five years before the Great War it received by far the greatest amount of critical attention. After Zola's Nana and L'Assommoir the corrosive effects of poverty on morality could hardly be regarded as a new theme in the novel, but interest among the public was undoubtedly heightened by the fact that Bubu was largely autobiographical. If the critics were divided on the work's literary merits the reading public showed itself as interested as ever in candid confessions.

The first chapter having appeared in the January 1901 issue of L'Ermitage under the title "Pierre Hardy", the work was published en volume later the same year by the "Editions de la Revue Blanche". It was the first of Philippe's writings not published at his own expense. [1] In contrast to the flat exposition of La Mère et l'enfant, this second novel relates

1. The following are the subsequent editions of Bubu de Montparnasse: Albin Michel (Paris) 1905, 1932, 1958; S.Kra (Paris) 1924; Fasquelle (Paris) 1927, 1970; La Société lyonnaise des XXX (Lyon) 1929; Editions du livre (Monte-Carlo) 1946; Livre de Poche (New York) 1948; Editions Rencontre (Lausanne) 1957; C.Coulet et A.Faure (Paris) 1958; Le Club français du livre (Paris) 1959; Livre de Poche (Paris) 1968; English translations were published by Crosby Continental Editions (Paris) 1932; Avalon Press (New York) 1945; Weidenfeld & Nicholson (London) 1952; Roy Publishers (New York) 1953; Berkley Publishing Corp. (New York) 1957; Paul Elek (London) 1960. A translation into Russian was issued at Moscow in 1929 and a German edition by Kurt Wolff Verlag (Munich) in 1920. All references to the French text are taken from the 1905 Albin Michel edition.

a familiar pattern of conflict between two rivals for the same woman. [1.] The plot follows closely certain of Philippe's personal experiences in Paris during 1898. In developing the individual characters, however, Philippe concentrates, stylises and even parodies traits he detects in himself and others and escapes from the purely autobiographical to present a picture of the dregs of Parisian society in terms of a more sophisticated philosophical outlook than that which had produced La Mère et l'enfant.

If the setting has changed from the country village in the first novel to the streets and sordid hôtels meublés of the capital, and the characters from an idealised mother and her child to the procurers and prostitutes of the boulevards, a central concern of the novel remains the effect of chronic poverty on the behaviour of the individual. [2.]

The three main characters are all working class under the definition by which the term is understood in this study. Pierre Hardy is an underpaid clerical worker and Bubu a cabinet maker turned pimp. The girl Berthe is a former flower seller whom poverty has driven to prostitution. The dramatic progression of the novel is simple. Pierre, recently arrived

1. This 'triangular' structure is a familiar one in Philippe's novels, repeated in the Jean Bousset-Marie-Raphaël relationship (Marie Donadieu) and again in that between Claude, Angèle and Croquignole (Croquignole).

2. See Jean Vaudal's preface to Philippe's Le Père Perdrix, Stock, Paris 1948, p.xxi: "/Les/ vraies idées /de Philippe/ n'ont pas vécu séparées de ses sentiments, c'est-à-dire de ses personnages et de leurs circonstances. S'il tient que la pauvreté est un malheur, il y voit surtout un état de communion. De là cette sympathie pour les criminels et les déchus, qui a pu paraître outrée ou naïve tant que l'on n'a pas reconnu qu'elle était un sentiment, un sentiment tout pur, et pas du tout un système.".

from the provinces, encounters Berthe "au lendemain du Quatorze Juillet" in the boulevard Sébastopol. After paying five francs for an hour of her services he arranges to meet her again and in this way inaugurates a relationship whose sexual nature gradually yields to a developing emotional bond between the two. The initial stage of the liaison is difficult as Berthe remains the property of Maurice Bélu, nicknamed Bubu de Montparnasse. He is a genial young man but entirely ruthless when controlling the woman who provides his sole income. When he is caught stealing and sent down to prison the way is left clear for the relationship between Pierre and the young prostitute to develop. With Bubu removed, Pierre attempts to persuade the girl to abandon her way of life. His arguments, reinforced with generous use of Biblical quotations, are reminiscent of those made by Nekhlyudov to Maslova in Tolstoy's Resurrection and the attempted redemption of the fallen woman in Zola's La Confession de Claude. Pierre's efforts see some success and, after being confined to a clinic for treatment of syphilis, Berthe resolves to find employment and lead a decent life. Before her intentions can be fulfilled, however, Bubu returns from gaol to reclaim the woman. This final scene which has considerable dramatic potential takes place in Pierre's bedroom in the early hours of the morning. The severely restrained and stylised manner in which the transfer is effected suggests that Philippe was not chained to autobiographical detail and was able to manipulate it to convey symbolic meaning. [1]

1. Philippe himself was not blind to the dramatic possibilities of his novel. With a view to producing Bubu for the stage it appears that he approached Jacques Copeau, future director of the Théâtre du Vieux-Colombier. Copeau's response

To establish the connection between the author's own experiences during his early years in the capital and the events and characters described in Bubu one has only to follow his correspondence with his friends. It is clear that the model for the prostitute Berthe Metenier was a certain Maria Tixier whom Philippe met on 15th July 1898. The following month a letter to Vandeputte shows that he had already formulated the intention of dissuading her from the life of occasional unchastity she had been living up to that point. Here we see the kernel of the redemption theme he later developed in the novel through Pierre:

> Aujourd'hui, c'est un des jours de crise. La raison en est assez simple et vient d'un lapin qui m'a été posé hier soir. Imagine-toi que, le lendemain du 14 Juillet, je recontrais la plus exquise petite créature du monde, très bonne, très intelligente, très douce et très corrompue. [...] J'aurais tant voulu lui faire du bien, l'éclairer, lui apprendre les choses de la vie qu'elle ne connaîtra jamais sans moi. [1]

It was not until October, when Maria decided that she could only support herself by returning to the streets, that

> was unequivocal: "Je viens de relire d'un trait Bubu. Eh bien non, je ne crois pas qu'il soit possible d'en tirer une piece de théâtre". (Letter to Philippe dated 22nd January 1909, Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.17, December 1959, p.316).

1. Letter of 12 August 1898. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, pp.99-100. From another letter, similarly self-righteous in tone, written three weeks later it is clear that one of his objectives was to develop in the girl both an awareness of her class and a sense of pride in it. At the time he wrote the following lines to Vandeputte, Maria was in hospital having treatment for what Philippe later discovered was syphilis: "J'aurais voulu l'élever jusqu'à moi, lui donner une belle âme de peuple [...] En peu de temps, je t'assure que j'aurais développé ses sentiments jusqu'à en faire des sentiments très nets, très purs et très délicats. Je lui aurais fait aimer la vie merveilleuse de ceux qui travaillent". (pp.95-96).

Philippe had the idea to make her the subject of his next novel. Despite his aversion to the roman à these it seems that Philippe first set out to write an apology for prostitution. Although he made no secret to Maria of his moral indignation at her decision ("Je la catéchise") he can justify her choice on the grounds of financial necessity. [1.]

It appears that his original approach to the novel was very much that of one who had been influenced by the naturalists' method of systematic documentation: "[J'ai] l'idée d'un roman où l'on verrait tout au long une jeune ouvrière devenir une prostituée [...] Bouquins de sociologie, d'économie politique, de statistique, je vais compulser tout cela". [2.] There is no evidence, however, to suggest that Philippe made anything more than a superficial study of the problem and certain remarks by Francis Jourdain who knew him well in Paris suggest that Philippe's interest might have been other than purely academic: "Les maisons dites d'illusion [...] Philippe les fréquentait avec un plaisir que l'apaisement de ces appétits ne suffisait pas à expliquer". [3.] What is certain is that Philippe's

1. "Je t'assure que dans les conditions sociales actuelles il est impossible d'avoir raison contre elle. Une ouvrière arrive à gagner 2 fr. 50 à 3 francs par jour. Il est bien évident que cela ne lui suffit pas et qu'elle doit se fair secourir". Letter of 26 October 1898 (Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.114).

2. Ibid., p.117. Letter of 4 December 1898.

3. Francis Jourdain, Sans Remords ni rancune, p.153. See also Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.108: "Lorsque Philippe allait dans les „maisons Tellier„ pour prendre des renseignements „in anima vili„ en vue d'écrire Bubu, il faisait montre là d'une verve et d'un cynisme ébouriffants; il effarait [...] celles qui ne devaient pas être faciles à effaroucher".

projected systematic analysis of what was a major contemporary social problem quickly transformed itself into a highly autobiographical account of a young provincial's introduction to Paris. The description of the Berthe-Bubu relationship is based not on any study of the bond between prostitute and pimp, but is an almost verbatim transcription of an account given Philippe by Maria of life in the streets. This dependence upon Maria's testimony included a direct transcription of certain letters written to Philippe while she was in hospital. Stuart Merrill claimed that after publication of Bubu, Maria had complained to him that Philippe had not even bothered to correct her spelling mistakes. [1.] In a similar way the sections of the novel concerned with Pierre and his attempts to salvage Berthe's dignity are drawn direct from Philippe's own memories of his life with Maria. [2.] To this extent Philippe attenuated any naturalist claim to a broad base for his observations and the story of Berthe Méténier, like that of Germinie Lacerteux, never delivers a general statement. We shall see however that Philippe, in the matter of style, did frequently give wholehearted endorsement to the naturalists' fascination with the sordid.

Just as the author's conception of good and evil appears more intricate than it did in La Mère et l'enfant, so too does the narrative viewpoint become more complex. Indeed Philippe's growing admiration for Nietzsche and the

1. See Stuart Merrill's article "Charles-Louis Philippe" in Mercure de France, 16 January 1910, p.198.

2. They lived in a single room, number 8, on the top floor of the Hôtel Loiret, rue des Mauvais Garçons.

realisation that exploitation could cross class boundaries and thrive among the proletariat itself made almost inevitable the break with the 'integral' narrator of La Mère et l'enfant. In the earlier work the unity of the narrative viewpoint depended upon and reflected a confidence in the absolute goodness of the working class contrasted with the evil of the bourgeois exploiters. The narrator and his mother were isolated in one camp and pitted against the world of their social betters. Under Nietzsche's influence Philippe abandoned the labels 'bourgeois' and 'proletarian' for a view of working class society in which natural law prevailed. In Bubu the first person convention is discarded in favour of an omniscient and not always impartial third voice. As he remained in the subsequent novels, Philippe shows himself for the first time uncertain whether his sympathy for the weak is unconditional or whether the strong are not also to be admired for a refusal to be subdued by their social environment. Although poverty is seen as the obvious root cause of prostitution and ultimately of the demi-monde that it supports, it is the interaction of the relative strengths and weaknesses of Berthe, Pierre and Bubu which is the fundamental theme unifying the novel.

Pierre and his friend Louis are composite creations and direct autobiographical projections. Inclined by temperament to sentimentality and idealism, they have much in common with the narrator of La Mère et l'enfant. Pierre is twenty years old and has been in the capital only six months when he encounters Berthe on the boulevard Sébastopol. Louis is more precisely cast in Philippe's mould. He studied mathematics in a provincial college until his twentieth year preparing himself for entrance to the Polytechnique, and

even his exact physical proportions are those of the author. The following lines introduce Louis into the novel and say as much about Philippe's attitude toward himself as they do about the character:

> C'était un petit homme de 1^{m},53 de hauteur qui avait été refusé au service militaire pour défaut de taille. A cause de cela, il n'inspirait pas beaucoup de respect à ses camarades, qui le considérait comme un bon garçon, mais dont l'importance n'avait qu'un mètre cinquante de hauteur. [1].

This is not an isolated example of self-parody and we shall come back to the general question of satire in Bubu. At this point Philippe's identification with these two figures is far from total and we must look elsewhere to find the novel's true hero.

The figure of Bubu himself is presented in a similar way to that of Louis. The physical is again used to convey quality of character:

> C'était un petit homme dont le torse reposait avec force sur des jambes solides [...] Et sa tête était osseuse, et ses deux yeux se cachaient derrière les pommettes, volontaires et un peu dissimulés. Il avait surtout deux mâchoires arquées qui broyaient les aliments avec un craquement d'os et de nerfs et de muscles [...] [2].

As we have noted, Bubu was modelled on the third element of the triangle in the Charles-Louis Philippe - Maria Tixier relationship. It is obvious however, even from the brief extract reproduced above, that in his emphasis on energy

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, Paris 1905, p.20. Philippe seems also to have wanted to link the figure of Louis with that of Lucien Jean, his best friend, a co-worker at the Hôtel de Ville and a fellow writer. Parallels exist in that Louis was Pierre Hardy's close friend, four years his senior and worked in the same office.

2. Ibid., p.42.

and brute strength Philippe is giving literary form to an instinct directly opposed to the pseudo-Christian virtues of bonté and charité seen thus far in his work. Although Bubu de Montparnasse had been written before Philippe formally read any of Nietzsche's work, his general understanding of the German's philosophy was such that in Bubu he created the first of a series of Nietzschean figures which reappear in the subsequent novels. Bubu is given sympathetic treatment despite the mental and, often, physical suffering he is seen to inflict on Berthe. With the ambiguous position held by Pierre and Louis in the affections of the author, this undeniable sympathy for the strong and potentially cruel completes the fragmentation of the narrative voice.

Victory in what amounts to a struggle for Berthe's soul and body is finally given to Bubu over Pierre in the novel's last scene. Almost incredibly this incident, like the rest of the novel, had its origin in Philippe's own experience and took place during the night of 29-30 December 1898. [1] In the account given in the novel Bubu, accompanied by a friend, makes his way into the hotel room where Pierre and Berthe are sleeping and commands the girl to get dressed and leave with him. His demand is followed by a slap and Berthe obeys. Bubu is in complete control of the events and can act with controlled courtesy to Pierre: "Je vous demande bien pardon, monsieur, de me présenter chez vous à cette heure de la nuit. D'ailleurs, je reviendrai vous voir pour mieux m'en

1. See Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe: l'homme, l'ecrivain, pp.44-45.

excuser et pour que vous ne me connaissiez pas sous ce mauvais jour". [1] Pierre's silence throughout the proceedings underlines the fact that the victory of volonté over weakness is total. This silence is not disturbed until the others leave and Pierre breaks down in sobbing self-recrimination. The novel ends with this condemnation of Pierre from his own mouth:

> Ah! je sais que tu vas pleurer; mon Dieu, mon Dieu! je n'ai pas de chance. Tu n'as pas assez de courage pour mériter le bonheur. Pleure et crève! [2]

In the letter of 7 January 1899 to Vandeputte, Philippe recounted some of the actual events the night Maria's 'protector' arrived.

> Ils avaient découvert son adresse et venaient chez moi pour la chercher. J'ai vu là une scène lamentable. Je n'avais aucun droit sur elle. Je n'étais pas en force. Je pense qu'elle ne protestait pas pour ne pas m'attirer de désagréments. Enfin, après m'avoir juré „sur sa conscience d'homme„ qu'il ne lui ferait aucun mal, le bonhomme l'a emmenée. Voilà. Il y a huit jours. Je ne sais plus ce qu'elle est devenue. [3]

In an article in the Mercure de France Stuart Merrill relates that when a short time later Maria again tried to free herself,

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.243. In a letter to Vandeputte (7 January 1899) Philippe left his only account of what really happened that night. The information provided is scanty and he made no attempt to reproduce the actual words spoken during that encounter. With little persuasion however one might endorse Louis Lanoizelée's conjecture that "Nous supposons que les paroles prononcées, pendant cette scène cruciale, n'ont pas été aussi littéraires que celles rapportées dans le roman". (Louis Lanoizelée, Charles-Louis Philippe; l'homme, l'ecrivain, p.45).

2. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.249.

3. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.120.

Philippe and a group of friends, including Lucien Jean, raised enough money between them "pour envoyer celle-ci à Marseille, hors d'atteinte de son marlou, et pour lui assurer l'existence dans cette ville jusqu'à ce qu'elle y trouvât un honnête travail". [1].

The essential conflict between two opposing forces around which Bubu de Montparnasse is developed escaped few of the novel's critics. However, what the precise nature of the struggle was and which side ultimately triumphed provoked considerable confusion. Paul Claudel, predictably, approached Bubu and the fight for possession of Berthe as a contest between good and evil. Pierre and Louis represented the force of Christian redemption. Claudel regarded Bubu's triumph over them as absolute and the damnation of Berthe as the inevitable consequence. He was repelled by Philippe's naturalistic elaboration of the sexual encounters and the bouts of disease which made up the cycle of a prostitute's life. He identified in the style, however, a realism tempered by the author's sympathy with his subject; a sympathy whose lyrical qualities saved this work from the worst excesses of Zola's sordid determinism. He pronounced the combination successful in evoking the milieu of the Paris boulevards. In a letter to André Gide (7 November 1905) he confided that he found

1. Mercure de France, 16 January 1910, p.198. Apparently Merrill, who had business to attend to in Marseilles shortly thereafter, was given the assignment of meeting Maria to check on her progress. The meeting duly took place "au coin de la Cannebière et du cours Belsunce".

Bubu "un livre grossier [...] qui m'a fait frémir". [1.] A year earlier he had written to Philippe himself to convey his initial reaction to the novel: "Je viens de lire votre livre, Bubu de Montparnasse, qui a fait une vive impression sur moi. De quel enfer nous sommes entourés! Le mal est toujours pareil à lui-même..." [2.]

In an enthusiastic review of Bubu de Montparnasse on its publication in 1901 Henri Ghéon, like Claudel, recognised the brake to naturalistic excess constituted by Philippe's class sympathies. [3.] Philippe did not exploit the technique of documentary exposé, as the naturalists had been accused of doing, in order to 'braver les bourgeois'. In his attempt to explain character in terms of physical environment he was more selective than the realists and naturalists had ever been. A panorama of boulevard life was rejected in favour of a more restricted series of densely descriptive instantanés. To the extent that this approach worked and remained unmarred by a resurgence of sentimentalism one can justify Ghéon's opinion that "[...] L'ordure même

1. Paul Claudel-André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926, p.53. In another letter to Gide (27 December 1912) he remarked that "J'ai parlé à l'abbé Fontaine de cet horrible livre de Philippe, Bubu de Montparnasse, qui a fait sur moi une profonde impression". (p.208).

2. Unedited letter dated 7 December 1904. Musée Charles-Louis Philippe, Cérilly. From his correspondence with Gide alone over the period 1905-1912 it is clear that Claudel admired Philippe's work and followed the development of his literary career with interest. See especially the letters to Gide of 27 December 1909, 30 December 1909, 2 February 1910, 12 November 1910, 11 July 1911. (Paul Claudel-André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926).

3. L'Ermitage, April 1901, pp.312-316.

devient là un élément d'art, mesuré, dosé, qui s'accepte". Notably in Bubu emphasis on the sordid atmosphere of the hôtels meublés and the vulgarity of the potential clientele is pressed into the service of compelling the reader's sympathy for prostitutes in general and Berthe in particular. If Ghéon found any cause for complaint it was in the relapse in the second half of the novel into that sentimentality characteristic of La Mère et l'enfant. He regretted the cloying religiosity of Pierre and Louis in their attempts to reform Berthe, but, he added, "[...] c'est l'affaire de quelques pages."

Ghéon was among the first of the contemporary reviewers who considered the purely aesthetic merits of Bubu to be enhanced by the sociological importance of Philippe's effort. He appeared to discount the very real success the Goncourts and Zola had had with the characterisation of Germinie and Gervaise, and even that of Maupassant with such figures as Rose in "Histoire d'une fille de ferme", in presenting individual studies of the mentality of poverty. He preferred Philippe's characters where the illusion of reality was heightened by a lyricism, the enthusiasm and sincerity of which was the product of the author's own experience. "Ces êtres monstrueux ou falots dans l'ordure, dont la psychologie nous semblait interdite, il les ferait rentrer dans l'humanité dont nous sommes, imaginant ou devinant leur raison d'être et d'être comme ils sont". [1] Such

1. See Francis Jourdain's evaluation of the extra-literary significance of Philippe: "Cette fidélité, cette ferme décision de forcer le privilégié à écouter le maudit trop longtemps condamné au silence, c'est cela qui fait grand le petit Philippe". (Sans Remords ni rancune, p.180).

collusion between working class author and working class subject anticipated both the formal declaration of Henry Poulaille's Ecole Prolétarienne in France and the brand of social realism popular in England and Germany in the 1930's.

If by "êtres monstrueux" Ghéon was identifying in Bubu not only the poor but also the sizable deputation from the criminal underworld present in the novel then he recognised Philippe's important role in establishing the credibility of a littérature de la pègre, a vein also exploited by the subsequent literary schools. The innovation, however, was not to everyone's taste. In her review of Bubu Rachilde, while not openly questioning Philippe's mastery of the theme, made clear her views on the inclusion of this newest, and presumably lowest, social group in the number of those subjects deserving literary treatment. "Bubu de Montparnasse est un chef-d'oeuvre, seulement il faut de l'estomac pour lire les chefs-d'oeuvre actuels. Il s'agit de la vie des pauvres, filles publiques et de leurs souteneurs". [1.] Finally, Ghéon acknowledged a certain artistic self-restraint distinguishing Bubu from La Mère et l'enfant and which the critic explained in terms of Nietzsche's influence. Despite the obvious exaggeration in his claim that Philippe had given perfect form to a new morality "par delà le bien et le mal", he recognised the potential for irony allowed by the less emotional attachment of author to subject in Bubu. [2.]

1. Mercure de France, April 1901, p.187.

2. "On sait la pitié qui parfumait ses premiers livres. La pitié le mena. Il eût pu la tolstoïser; sa sensibilité charmante l'y prédisposait quelque peu. Que non pas! Il plaignit, mais voulut comprendre. Voici que l'ironie des choses réveilla chez lui l'ironie". (L'Ermitage, April 1901, p.313).

Of all the critics of Bubu de Montparnasse, J. Ernest-Charles was the least sensitive to the thematic tension represented by Pierre and Bubu, although he kept abreast of Philippe's career and was a professed admirer of his writing. Like Claudel and Ghéon he acknowledged Philippe's ability to merge the lyric with the naturalistic. "[...] Ses humbles héros sont tous admirables. Ils le sont, car Charles-Louis Philippe sait introduire la poésie jusque dans les réalités quotidiennes de leur médiocre existence". [1] He admitted, however, that Philippe's ability to weave together the two strands was not perfect and that the novels occasionally suffered from the author's self-conscious attempts to achieve stylistic effect. In an article published after Philippe's death he wrote that, while he considered Bubu the best of the novels, he much preferred the short stories for their precision of style and unity of thought: [...] Il s'y dépouillait de toutes ses petites prétentions littéraires gênantes, de cette préciosité mièvre et appuyée qui encombrent ses autres ouvrages." [2]

In the opinion of Ernest-Charles the influence of naturalism on Bubu de Montparnasse was supreme: "Il n'est personne qui, lisant Bubu de Montparnasse, ne se persuade que Charles-Louis Philippe est le disciple attardé, très attardé, du naturalisme [...] Bubu de Montparnasse est, en somme, le roman de la syphilis". [3] The reader was confronted

1. La Revue bleue, 26 November 1904, p.698. See article by Charles-Henry Hirsch, Mercure de France, 1 January 1910, p.188: "C'est dans cette fusion de la vulgarité des sujets avec la recherche parfois presque précieuse du rendu que résidait l'art de Philippe".

2. La Grande Revue, 10 August 1911, p.618.

3. La Revue bleue, 26 November 1904, pp.696-697.

with the return of that all encompassing determinism which ground Zola's characters into submission. "Charles-Louis Philippe est fataliste et [...] dans son livre la fatalité supprime toute responsabilité humaine [...] Les prostituées, les souteneurs obéissent à leurs instincts, presque sans comprendre, ou s'ils comprennent, ils ne peuvent résister". [1] Ernest-Charles was seriously underestimating Philippe's achievement with characterisation in Bubu where Berthe alone, a pawn in the contest between Pierre and Bubu, appears totally passive in the role allocated her by destiny.

To the extent that he reduced them to the level of bêtes instinctives Ernest-Charles considered Philippe's characters two dimensional. Absent from his account was that leaven of Nietzschean will which stimulated the interaction of the characters and provided the novel's dramatic progression. The critic undervalued Bubu's efforts to improve his circumstances by challenging society on his own terms. [2] Even Pierre's Christian 'activism' and the attempts to convert Berthe, as ineffective as they ultimately prove to be, can be seen as a reaction to the degradation society was trying to impose on the individual. Although all the articles by Ernest-Charles on Philippe's novels were openly sympathetic, he did the author an injustice by failing to recognise in

1. La Revue bleue, 26 November 1904, pp.696-697.

2. In this he was joined by Philippe's friend and compatriot, Emile Guillaumin, who saw Bubu as an essentially apathetic character whose actions represented a conscious surrender of individual independence. "[Philippe] voyait son Bubu comme un ouvrier ordinaire qui en arrive par goût de la paresse à perdre toute conscience de la vie honnête, à se laisser happer par le milieu". (Emile Guillaumin, Mon compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, p.130).

them any stylistic or thematic progression whatsoever:

"[...] Sa conception du monde ne s'affirme pas mieux dans Le Père Perdrix ou dans Marie Donadieu qu'elle ne s'était affirmée dans La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie, dans La Mère et l'enfant, et dans Bubu de Montparnasse". [1]

The very difference between the intolerable sentimentality of works like La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie or La Mère et l'enfant and the self-conscious parody in Bubu is in itself too fundamental to be ignored.

Michel Arnauld was much more perceptive in acknowledging a developing maturity in Philippe's writing. He saw in Bubu not only a welcome complexity of theme but also the tightening of style which went some way towards repudiating the emotionalism of the earlier works. Any relapse where sentimentality threatened plausibility was quickly called to account. Arnauld was not as willing as Ghéon had been to dismiss as incidental Pierre's emotional attempts to convert Berthe described in the second half of the novel:

> [...] Vers la fin, notre sympathie est glacée par trop d'élans de charité et d'invocations au Seigneur. Cher poète, les faits parlent assez d'eux-mêmes, ne nous faites pas douter de ce que nous avons vu. On devrait aujourd'hui retourner le vieux précepte d'Horace: „Pour m'arracher des pleurs, il faut ne pas pleurer." [2]

Similarly, writing in the memorial issue of the Nouvelle Revue Française dedicated to Philippe, Arnauld complained of this "faiblesse sentimentale" which marred a novel in

1. La Revue bleue, 26 November 1904, p.694.
2. La Revue blanche, January-April 1901, p.394.

which "Le style vaut avant tout par sa franchise d'attaque". [1] His most serious---and no doubt justified---reservation about the novel concerned the lack of development in the character of Berthe. Here he anticipated Ernest-Charles' more sweeping judgment of Philippe's 'flat' characters. Berthe is of tangential significance to the novel, merely providing the necessary prize over which the battle between bonté and volonté is fought. Her voice is rarely heard and she shows no independence of mind, relying alternately on Bubu and Pierre for direction. The sacrifice of Berthe to Bubu in the final scene in the bedroom is denied any element of tragedy by the girl's chronic inability to make moral choices. "[...] Le dénouement," wrote Arnauld, "ne nous déchire point le coeur; nous n'avons pas assez cru que Berthe pût être sauvée". [2]

In an assessment of Philippe's career for La Nouvelle Société after the author's death in 1909, Louis Pierard defined further that lyric quality which had attracted general notice among the critics. [3] Admitting that Philippe had "quelque peu torturé la souple langue française", Pierard suggested that he had done so in the manner of a Verhaeren. Here he was recognising that the effectiveness of Philippe's style depended on his talent for the juxtaposition of seemingly incongruous imagery with the banality of real life---a legacy from his early enthusiasm for Mallarmé---to convey the most

1. Michel Arnauld, "L'oeuvre de Charles-Louis Philippe", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.XIV, p.145.

2. La Revue blanche, January-April 1901, p.393.

3. La Société Nouvelle, 15th January 1910, pp.86-92.

trivial details in the daily routine of his characters. He appreciated less well the influence that Philippe's earlier lachrymose tendencies still had on style in Bubu. We shall see to what extent he was mistaken in ignoring the emotional aspect of Philippe's tendresse, especially in its particularised form as it attached to such figures as Berthe, and attempting too close a comparison with Dostoievsky's conception of a universal pity: "Car un amour, un amour immense des hommes, cette large pitié qui n'a rien de pleurnichard, qui est celle d'un Dostoïevsky, anime les romans de Philippe". [1] If Pierard misrepresented the nature of bonté his criticism is valuable in that it struck the balance between those who, like Ernest-Charles, recognised an absolute supremacy of fatality in the novel and those for whom Bubu's triumph represented on the contrary the victory of human will over circumstance. [2] Of this latter group by far the most influential critic was François Talva, who in his study on Philippe saw the power struggle in Bubu as one between the maître concept of Nietzsche and the apôtre of Tolstoy: "C'est Nietzsche et Tolstoï face à face et c'est Nietzsche qui l'emporte. L'apôtre échoue et la femme n'est pas sauvée". [3]

1. La Société Nouvelle, 15th January 1910, p.90. See also J. Ernest-Charles, La Grande Revue, 10th August 1911, p.624: "Je ne sais si Dostoïevsky a exercé une influence nettement définissable sur le talent littéraire de Ch.-L.Philippe. Il n'a rien ajouté à ses idées ni à ses sentiments, que Ch.L.Philippe a puisés à même la vie".

2. Firmly on the side of Ernest-Charles can be placed Daniel Mornet who assessed the characters in Bubu in terms of "brutes instinctives et /des/ épaves roulant dans la misère parisienne". (Daniel Mornet, Histoire de la littérature et de la pensée françaises contemporaines, Paris 1927, p.26.)

3. François Talva, Charles-Louis Philippe et son oeuvre, Moulins 1949, p.22.

Against these two extremes Pierard served to remind the reader that while Bubu's exploitation of Berthe did constitute an act of individual will, his victory was a relative one. Within the context of the novel, although Bubu might be able to consolidate and even improve his position in the criminal hierarchy, he was powerless to break completely with the insecurity and disease which ultimately defined his life in the streets. Bubu was, wrote Pierard, "[...] dominateur, tyrannique, mais digne pourtant de pitié autant que la pauvre fille qu'il exploite". [1.]

In an article which appeared a month after Philippe's death Stuart Merrill showed himself surprisingly severe in judging his friend's work. [2.] Although insisting on the author's personal virtues he left no doubt that he considered Bubu the only competent novel Philippe had produced. He blamed Philippe's imperfect formal education in literature---he had, after all studied mathematics at the lycée---for the lack of discipline and the excessively retrograde nature of La Mère et l'enfant and the earlier works. "On sent dans l'oeuvre préparatoire de Charles-Louis Philippe tout l'effort d'un écrivain qui ne connaît ni les origines, ni l'histoire, ni les lois de sa langue". To that he added, somewhat enigmatically, "Et j'attribue de pareilles erreurs à une ignorance complète du latin." For Merrill it seemed that Bubu was Philippe's only successful attempt to enter into the mainstream of both French and foreign literary

1. La Société Nouvelle, 15 January 1910, p.90.

2. Stuart Merrill, "Charles-Louis Philippe," Mercure de France, 16 January 1910, p.197.

history. It marked that happy juncture where Philippe "consentait à écrire avec simplicité, selon sa nature." Le Père Perdrix, Marie Donadieu and Croquignole were inferior because in them he was trying self-consciously to fabricate a sophisticated style: "[...] Il devenait détestable dès qu'il essayait de s'exprimer, oserais-je dire, à la façon de ces messieurs de Paris, comme un paysan qui s'engonce dans ses habits du dimanche". [1.] Of all the critics Merrill alone was prepared to see in Philippe's work a mere prolongation of nineteenth century realist method. Even Ernest-Charles who had emphasised the influence of the naturalists had admitted the symbolic dimension Philippe added to his portrayal of the people. Merrill on the other hand faulted him for confusing the art of writing with a facile presentation of accumulated detail. "Le détail secondaire saillissait de ses tableaux aussi vivement que le morceau principal. Comme les myopes, il regardait de trop près sa toile [...] sans se douter que l'art consiste non pas à copier la vie, mais à en dégager les lignes expressives."

In a study of the works of his friend, Lucien Jean had anticipated this line of criticism and rebutted it, maintaining that Philippe's talent lay in exactly the opposite direction from a painstaking accumulation of detail. He acknowledged the "incertitude" in all Philippe's works, as the author was pulled between pity for the victims

1. Merrill emphasised his reservations about the great majority of Philippe's work with the admonition that "[...] son ami Lucien Jean qui traitait les mêmes sujets que lui, aurait dû lui donner l'exemple du goût, de la mesure et de la retenue.".

of circumstance and his desire to emphasise the brute force latent in man's nature and necessary to challenge the established order. He added: "Contrairement à la plupart des écrivains modernes qui essaient de donner l'illusion de la vie par une accumulation de notations, il simplifie à la manière classique et ses héros ont des gestes simples, expressifs, qui ont l'importance d'un sentiment". [1.]

Well acquainted with Philippe's writing, T.S. Eliot adopted the same view as Lucien Jean although sharing Merrill's doubts about the later novels, and especially Marie Donadieu. [2.] Like Merrill he considered Philippe to be continuing in the line of the orthodox realists but thought the success of Bubu due to the author's skill in his choice of detail to portray what was truly representative

1. From an essay entitled "Charles-Louis Philippe" in the volume of Jean's collected writings, Parmi les hommes, Paris 1910, p.232.

2. It was Alain-Fournier who had introduced Eliot to Philippe's work. (See Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.23, December 1965, p.33.) See also Eliot's preface to an English translation, Bubu of Montparnasse, Avalon Press, New York 1945. Eliot had read Philippe's works during the winter of 1911 while studying in Paris. Impressed by the realism of the novelist's descriptions of the city he drew certain images and settings for "Preludes" III and IV (1911) and "Rhapsody on a Windy Night" (1911) from Bubu and Marie Donadieu. (See Grover Smith, T.S. Eliot's Poetry and Plays, University of Chicago Press, 1960, pp.21-24.) More specifically, B.C. Southam suggests a connection between lines 2-3 of The Waste Land ("Lilacs out of the dead land, mixing/ Memory and desire") with the following passage from Bubu:

> Un homme qui marche porte toutes les choses de sa vie et les remue dans sa tête. Un spectacle les éveille, un autre les excite. Notre chair a gardé tous nos souvenirs, nous les mêlons à nos désirs. (Bubu de Montparnasse, p.13.)

See B.C. Southam, A Student's Guide to the Selected Poems of T.S. Eliot, London 1968, p.73.

in the mediocre existence of his subjects. Eliot insisted that imagination was not one of Philippe's gifts and that in fact, "He was not 'un homme de lettres'." This approach was too materialistic and prevented him, as it had both Ernest-Charles and Daniel Mornet, from discerning the central moral conflict which motivated the novel. "Whether he is concerned, as in /Bubu/, with the prostitutes and mackerels of the Boulevard Sebastopol, or, as in more of his books, with the poorest class of decent-living provincial peasantry, it is with the inarticulate and underfed, those who are too depressed to be rebellious". [1] This attitude ignored not only the example of Bubu, but also the more patently rebellious acts of Jean Bousset in Le Père Perdrix and of the eponymous hero Croquignole.

"/Philippe/ is now recognised as one of the most individual, as well as influential, of modern French writers". This was the inflated claim of a later English critic who also seriously misjudged the nature of the conflict in Bubu. In his introduction to a 1952 English translation, Alan Ross betrayed his own superficial reading of the text. Ignoring the humanitarian nature of Pierre's efforts with Berthe he saw the novel solely in terms of a prostitute's frantic struggle for money and Bubu's manoeuvrings to protect his investment. The wider significance of the Pierre-Bubu confrontation was lost to him and the total lack of a bourgeois presence in the novel did not prevent him from giving this simplistic interpretation of the characters'

1. The emphasis is mine.

actions: "They try to better their conditions in order to remove the barriers that exist between them and the rich."[1] Continuing his enthusiastic introduction to the book, which was quite representative of the warm reception Bubu received among the English critics in general, Ross declared that "Anyone reading /Bubu/ cannot fail to be struck by the unsentimental characterisation /.../" This was a contentious statement to make for, as we have indicated earlier, the degree of intimacy in the relationship between author and characters is one of the most intriguing aspects of the novel. A reasonable argument can be advanced that the emotionally charged manner in which Pierre and Louis are developed was not an indication of Philippe's own sympathy for them but rather a calculated foil by which the character of Bubu was intended to be judged, and judged favourably. Even if this approach is accepted it is difficult to dismiss as ironic the description of Berthe as the suffering innocent or the solicitous paternalism extended on occasion to the hero himself. Henri Bachelin, one of Philippe's staunchest supporters and who held Bubu de Montparnasse in highest esteem, was forced nonetheless to voice his reservations about the sentimentality in the portrayal of Berthe ("pauvre petite sainte!") and, to a lesser extent, in that of Bubu: "Je suis de ceux qui sentent la haute émotion qui se dégage /.../ de tout le livre. Elle ne s'imposerait pas moins si Philippe, de-ci, de-là, ne forçait point la note à propos

1. See the Introduction by Alan Ross to Bubu of Montparnasse, Weidenfeld and Nicolson, London 1952, p.vi.

de Berthe comme, un peu moins, de Bubu". [1]

Arnold Bennett's own modest beginnings undoubtedly predisposed him to the efforts of the proletarian writers. He took an active interest in the commercial success of Marguerite Audoux, offering to negotiate the translation and publication rights of her Marie-Claire (1910) for the American market. Charles-Louis Philippe he had never met personally but missed few opportunities on a more informal level to promote Bubu de Montparnasse. In his journal entry for 15th December 1913 he recorded his initial reactions to the novel:

> I read Bubu de Montparnasse lately. A little book; good. Then Dans les Rues, of Rosny Aîné, which describes the making of an apache. This is a less absorbing book, by a greater man than C.L.Philippe. Some of the scenes in it are magnificent. It did not enchant me, as did some of Bubu [...] [2]

Bennett added nothing to the body of criticism on Philippe's work, but the following extracts from his correspondence confirm his interest in promoting Bubu, which he particularly admired, among the circle of his own friends. In a letter to Elsie Herzog (Monte Carlo, 16 March 1914) he reprimanded

1. Henri Bachelin, Charles-Louis Philippe, son oeuvre, Paris 1929, p.60.

2. The Journals of Arnold Bennett, Newman Flower (ed.), London 1932, Vol.II, p.75. In the entry for 25th July 1910 Bennett recounted a curious incident not mentioned elsewhere by any of Philippe's friends:

> Godebski said that C.L.Philippe never saw the sea till 2 years before his death. Fargue took him to Havre. On meeting the sea, he lay down in a sort of ecstasy or hysteria, on his stomach, and lapped at each wave as it came in as if determined to make up for lost time by the violence of his sensations. (Vol.I, p.377.).

her admiration for two books he considered failures---W.B.Maxwell's The Devil's Garden (1913) and Hugh Walpole's Fortitude (1913)---and added, "It seems to me that you had better read some good novels in which there is no slush nor tush. You might read Bubu de Montparnasse, by C.L.Philippe (if you haven't already done so) [...]"[1]. Again offering advice to a lady friend he wrote to Harriet Cohen (London, 20 April 1926): "But you needn't read Henri Bataille who is quite 2nd rate, M. Coppée, who is 3rd rate [...] Barrès is all right sometimes [...] You ought to read Charles Louis Philippe's Bubu de Montparnasse."[2].

Lucien Jean was justified in distinguishing a certain polar tension---he called it "incertitude"---in Bubu de Montparnasse. Philippe found himself caught between two mutually hostile forces at work in the novel and unable in the final account to reconcile them satisfactorily. At one of these poles was a conception of fatalité (the word itself recurs with irritating regularity in the book) borrowed directly from the naturalists. Although not as exclusive as Ernest-Charles and Daniel Mornet claimed it to be, fatalism sets the dominant tone as most of the characters, despite the sporadic exercise of free will by some, remain totally passive in the face of circumstance. Devoid, to a surprising degree in a man whose background and sympathies were with the working people, both of a humanitarian zeal for social improvement and of the socialist confidence in the ultimate perfectibility

1. Arnold Bennett, Letters, James Hepburn (ed.), London 1968, Vol.II (1889-1915), p.344.

2. Ibid., Vol.III (1916-1931), pp.265-266.

of man, Philippe was fundamentally a conservative. He was not, as T.S.Eliot recognised, "explicitly concerned with altering things". [1.]

Philippe's brand of fatalité, however, went beyond the naturalists' materialistic determinism and was on occasion developed as the expression of a divine will. This aspect of Philippe's social vision was not lost on André Dunoyer de Ségonzac whose etchings illustrated the edition of Bubu published by the Société Lyonnaise des XXX in 1929. In an article entitled "Pourquoi j'ai choisi Bubu" he wrote that

> /Philippe/ garde une sorte de passivité - une soumission touchante devant les épreuves de la vie.--- Aucune révolte, même pas d'amertume ---Par là, il voisine avec l'esprit religieux. [2.]

Berthe in particular is seen as fulfilling a role in a divinely ordained plan which leaves her no room to manoeuvre. Virtue and self-respect are denied her from the beginning by a God who himself is considered by the narrator as immoral and who closely resembles the "Dieu trompeur" of La Mère et l'enfant:

> Ce n'est rien, Seigneur. C'est une femme, sur un trottoir, qui passe et qui gagne sa vie parce qu'il est bien difficile de faire autrement. Un homme s'arrête et lui parle parce que vous nous avez donné la femme comme un plaisir. Et puis cette femme est Berthe, et puis vous savez le reste. [3.]

1. See T.S.Eliot's preface to the Avalon Press translation, Bubu of Montparnasse, p.10.

2. See "Denoyer de Ségonzac, Albert Marquet, et d'autres illustrateurs de Bubu de Montparnasse", being the programme of an exhibition organised by the Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe in the Centre Culturel Valery Larbaud (Vichy) from 31 May to 14 June 1964.

3. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.173.

Recourse to the metaphysical is infrequent, however, and it is in terms of the tangible contemporary world that Philippe develops his novel. This realism which Eliot much admired is a product of Philippe's attempt to explain his characters as a function of their environment. Bubu opens with the following description of the city at night:

> Le Boulevard Sébastopol, au lendemain du Quatorze-Juillet, vivait encore. Neuf heures et demie du soir. Les arcs voltaïques, d'un blanc criard parmi les rangées d'arbres, découpent quelques ombres ou sont perdus dans les feuillages. Les magasins sont fermés [...] et leur façades sombres, en bas des grandes maisons noires, leurs façades qui tantôt l'éclairaient, ont l'air maintenant d'assombrir le trottoir. Les hautes enseignes dorées que le soleil du jour faisait briller aux balcons [...] se perdent dans le noir avec leurs lettres de bois jaune et semblent se reposer, le soir, comme le commerce en gros. Fleurs et plumes, ventes de fonds de commerce, produits alimentaires, tissus, on ferme leurs volets et se sont tus, boulevard Sébastopol [...] Le Boulevard Sébastopol vit tout entier sur le trottoir. Sur le large trottoir, dans l'air bleu d'une nuit d'été, au lendemain du Quatorze-Juillet, Paris passe et traîne un reste de fête. 1.

This is not a purely descriptive realism used in the Balzacian manner to relate character to milieu, as Louis Pierard half perceived, but rather that heightened, 'symbolic' realism found in Zola's portraits of the capital. As his predecessor had animated the marketplace and department stores in Le Ventre de Paris and Au Bonheur des Dames so Philippe employed a similar anthropomorphic distortion of the purely physical to breathe life into the Parisian streets.

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, pp.1-3.

Philippe, like Zola and the Goncourts, made use of the popular idiom to enhance the illusion of authenticity he was trying to create. Curiously, he tended to place the coarser language in the mouths of his female characters. The male protagonists Bubu, Pierre and Louis are well-spoken and Berthe, for the most part, remains silent. Such a division could be accidental but there is little doubt that it made the effect for which the author was striving more daring and could hardly have failed to startle the majority of his contemporary readers. When, having left the clinic, Berthe visits Bubu's mother to ask for news of her imprisoned son the girl is met with a string of abuse: "---C'est pour vous que mon fils a fait ça. Je sais tout, que vous lui avez donné vos maladies de pourriture, et puis je sais d'où vous sortez". [1] Berthe later recounts this meeting to her sister Blanche who is also a prostitute. Blanche exclaims:

> ---Comment! Tu n'as pas su répondre! Je lui aurais tout dit. Je lui aurais dit: Vieille hypocrite, vous êtes trop contente que je le nourisse. Vous faites des manières parce que vous savez que je suis trop bête. Il n'a pas une guenille au cul qu'il ait gagnée par lui-même. Qu'il y vienne, vous verrez si je sais faire foutre le camp aux maquereaux! [2].

Philippe recognised and responded to a need for linguistic realism but he restricted himself to a popular speech easily comprehensible to middle class readers. He did not attempt to transcribe urban argot or the more specialised slang of the criminal underworld defined by one contemporary philologist as the "crypto-glose". [3].

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.159.
2. Ibid., p.164.
3. Raoul de la Grasserie, Des Parlers des différentes classes sociales. Etudes de psychologie et de sociologie linguistiques, Paris 1909, p.9.

Although Philippe stopped short of Zola's concept of a hérédité du sang he succeeded in conveying the overriding sense of helplessness of his characters in the grip of what appears at times an almost carnivorous city. [1.] "Ma pauvre enfant, ce n'est ni ta faute ni la mienne. Nous vivons dans un monde ou les pauvres doivent souffrir". [2.] Pierre's declaration to Berthe summarises the atmosphere prevailing in the novel. Although his own efforts to reform the girl do constitute a form of rebellion against social forces Pierre is armed only with the outmoded virtues of bonté and charité and his ultimate defeat is certain. In this respect nothing distinguishes him from the prostitute or from the groups of ragged beggars roaming the streets. The description of one such group, a family singing for its supper, is reproduced below not only as indicative of the general backdrop of misère in Bubu but also of that blending of realistic detail and poetic image appreciated by Claudel, Ghéon and Charles-Henry Hirsch:

> Le père raclait un violon de bois rouge [...] et regardait le cercle des badauds avec des yeux aigus où l'on voyait passer des étincelles et du sang. La mère, au ventre grossi par les couches, aux seins bouffis de bête usée, avait dans sa face en débris deux yeux bleus comme deux fleurs sales [...] Et les deux petits enfants, qui, tout le soir avaient chanté, tremblaient sur leurs jambes. L'un d'eux tournait

1. Leo Spitzer, in an attempt to infer psychological traits from the writer's style, sees in the recurrence of the "à cause de" construction in Bubu an indication of Philippe's melancholic fatalism. See "Pseudoobjektive Motivierung bei Charles-Louis Philippe", Zeitschrift für französische Sprache und Literatur, Oppeln & Leipzig, XLVI (1923), pp.659-685.

2. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.186.

> les yeux comme une bête mauvaise; il ressemblait à son père; il etait si las qu'il aurait voulu mordre. Mais le plus petit, jaune avec ses yeux bleus, aurait voulu, comme la mère, tomber sur le dos et dormir. [1].

The symbol of the bête humaine inherited from the naturalists is apparent in the passage quoted above. It was a favourite one of Philippe's and attained the status of a leitmotiv in Bubu. Nowhere is it used with more effect than in evoking the banality of a prostitute's life. The author employs the metaphor for its concept of a docile indifference to suffering compounded with the image of living flesh up for sale to the highest bidder. Pierre himself, before meeting Berthe, was well used to judging the quality of the ladies in the streets. On one occasion, following a young working girl, "Il l'examinait, la soupesait en pensant à la quantité de bonheur qu'elle pourrait donner". [2]. The final glimpse the reader has of Berthe, as Bubu leads her away, entrenches the theme of fatalism by emphasising in the girl a bovine willingness to accept her lot. "Elle partait dans un monde où la bienfaisance individuelle est sans force parce qu'il y a l'amour et l'argent, parce que ceux qui font le mal sont implacables et parce que les filles publiques en sont marquées dès l'origine comme des bêtes passives que l'on mène au pré communal." [3].

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.31.

2. Ibid., p.26.

3. Ibid., p.248. See Philippe's letter to Henri Vandeputte (15 February 1899; "Une prostituée, mon ami, est souvent une pauvre créature que la Destinée a choisie pour faire le mal. Elle n'est plus elle-même, mais une partie du Destin." (Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.122.).

One final passage drawn from the text will indicate to what extent Philippe owed much of the vividness of his style to the example of his naturalist predecessors. Like Zola, who in La Terre had provoked widespread indignation among his colleagues, Philippe laid himself open to the charge of sensationalism with the images he employed in Bubu. Zola had been accused of overcharging the brutality of his portrait of the Fouan family by, among other things, an unjustifiable emphasis on their sexual appetites. Philippe was hardly less fascinated by the exploits of his characters and in his choice of imagery was apparently not unduly concerned with protecting middle class sensibilities Just hours before he first makes the acquaintance of Berthe, Pierre wanders the streets in physical need of a woman. Refusing to approach the filles publiques who look too easy, and too timid to accost those who do not, his frustration finally compels him to act. "Pour avoir la paix il prenait la première venue, et, sur un lit d'hôtel meublé, moyennant quarante sous, se déversait dans une fille sale comme un déversoir public." [1]. This particular incident is especially pungent and helps account for the fact that the first English translation was banned in Britain. [2].

At the opposite end of the pole to Philippe's fatalism was the theme of the efficacy of individual will which, as we have noted, derived from his understanding of Nietzsche. While less important than determinism and the naturalistic

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.26.

2. The translation was published in Paris by Crosby International Editions (1932).

devices Philippe employed to express it, the concession made to free will in Bubu unleashes a stylistic energy in contrast with the turgid structures used to suggest the constrictions of fate. Although they never take full flight there are tentative expressions of an almost romantic élan towards individual fulfilment which here and there inject the novel with a certain forceful optimism and sense of direction. The enthusiasm Philippe allowed himself for this potential in man to act independently gives rise to lyric passages consistent with that poetic element which persisted, as we have seen, amid the bleakest descriptive realism. Even the spiritual energy expended by Pierre and Louis in what was finally a fruitless attempt to reform Berthe is viewed as a step in the right direction and a welcome relief from the general atmosphere of silent resignation. Their actions are accordingly described with all the naïve passion Pierre and Louis themselves inspire in each other.

It is, however, primarily in developing Bubu and his friend and fellow-traveller "le Grand Jules" that Philippe permits himself the greatest exuberance. How different in nature the character emerging in the following description of Jules from those semi-bestial examples, like Berthe, of society's victims:

> Il agissait fermement selon sa volonté. Il savait briser une serrure et pouvait tuer un homme avec simplicité. Les femmes l'entouraient d'amour comme des oiseaux qui chantent le soleil et la force. Il était un de ceux que nul ne peut assujettir, car leur vie, plus noble et plus belle, comporte l'amour du danger. [1].

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.57.

Bubu himself is seen to have eluded the mark of servitude of his class by avoiding the necessity to work. He was originally a carpenter but is quick to appreciate the lucrative alternatives open to him: "Il était intelligent, il vivait à Paris où les plaisirs hurlent en passant; il avait travaillé d'abord, puis il avait compris que les travailleurs qui peinent sont des dupes." [1] His attitude denies all the moral justifications for honest employment that Pierre and Louis embody and in which Philippe himself half believed. This ambivalence towards labour, although the briefest sketch in Bubu, is indicative of a deeper ambiguity in this novel and one which becomes clearer in a discussion of Philippe's theme of redemption. The moral value of labour is a problem which re-emerges in Philippe's last novel Charles Blanchard where it is treated in more depth.

Apart from the final scene in which Berthe is reclaimed, Bubu's finest hour arrives when he deliberately pits himself against the greatest enemy common to pimps and prostitutes: syphilis. Having discovered that Berthe has the disease he returns home determined nonetheless to make love to her. He is convinced that he can overcome anything provided that he is in control of the events. As if to prove to himself and confirm his intention he steals a box of mandarines and makes his way back to Berthe.

> Il marchait avec tant de passion que ses jambes semblaient soulevées. S'il n'avait pas la vérole, il était grand temps de l'avoir. Il allait à son but, ses mandarines sous le bras, l'âme élargie, avec une voix si forte qu'il

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.64.

> ne pensait même pas à jeter un
> regard en arrière. [1].

If, given the risks involved, Bubu's action appears foolhardy, within the terms of reference of the novel itself it is a remarkable achievement. The dynamism of character presented in the passage reproduced above complemented by an explicit description of the sex act which immediately follows demonstrates Philippe's facility in combining the heroic and the vulgar.

In one important respect Bubu de Montparnasse marked the beginning of Philippe's mature work as a novelist, relegating La Mère et l'enfant to the limbo of ouvrages préparatoires. From Bubu onwards Philippe's vision of society no longer divided along strictly class lines between rich and poor but was rather based on an interaction between strong and weak. The bourgeois are in fact only tangentially present in this work, vague shadows in the background of the Paris streets where women are purchased for pleasure. Within the context of the novel there is no middle class participation in the exploitation of Berthe, her downfall being entirely at the hands of members of her own class. The proletarian has lost his privileged position as defenceless victim and assumes responsibility for his own moral conduct.

If the perspective has changed, Philippe's conception of social reality in Bubu remains a rather simplistic dichotomy. His tendency is still to produce two dimensional, 'flat' characters created expressly to convey one half or the other of his equation. Neither has an exclusive claim on Philippe

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.115.

and they exist uneasily side by side, with the reader caught between the author's shifting sympathies. [1.] This ambivalence can be seen in the author's own changing attitude to his central character. In response to an enquete conducted by Georges Le Cardonnel and Charles Vellay, Philippe remarked that, "Quand j'ai conçu Bubu, je voulais d'abord faire un personnage rebarbatif. Puis je l'ai compris, vu ses origines, ses souffrances, ses raisons devant la vie, et je me suis mis à l'aimer." [2.] In a letter to André Ruyters (December 1902) Philippe upbraided his friend for not appreciating the strength of his sympathy for this character. "Pour Bubu, tu n'as donc pas senti que toute ma sympathie allait à Bubu, que je lui donnais la victoire parce qu'il était le personnage actif et fort, que je condamnais son antagoniste et que c'était le mot de la fin: „Pleure et crève! Tu n'as pas assez de courage pour mériter le bonheur.„" [3.]

Disappointed at the failure of Ruyters to recognise the element of volonté in the novel Philippe exaggerated somewhat his allegiance to Bubu. As we shall see, certainly not all

1. This division between weak and strong is apparent in all the subsequent novels. With the figure of Bubu symbolising the force of free will are grouped Jean Bousset (Le Père Perdrix and Marie Donadieu), Croquignole (Croquignole) and the first portrait of the uncle in "La Maison du sabotier" (Charles Blanchard). After Pierre and Berthe, the weak characters are represented by old Perdrix (Le Père Perdrix), Marie (Marie Donadieu), Félicien, Claude and Angèle (Croquignole) and Solange (Charles Blanchard).

2. See Valery Larbaud, Ce Vice impuni la lecture, p.300.

3. "Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.XIV, 1910, p.250.

his sympathy was directed towards this single character. Philippe appeared to have overlooked, too, that element of charm in the figure of Bubu that owed less to personal strength than to his insouciant attitude to social convention and an ability to express himself articulately. His relationship with Berthe was not without its romantic, if rather voluptuous, side:

> Il l'aimait bien, pourtant. Il l'aimait parce qu'elle était jolie. Le Soir, quand elle revenait du travail, il l'entendait monter l'escalier. Il reconnaissait son petit pas pressé et il lui semblait la voir se tortillant un peu pour aller plus vite. Il aimait les yeux souriants et doux qui approuvaient tous ses désirs [...] Il aimait cela qui la distinguait de toutes les femmes qu'il avait connues, parce que c'était plus doux, parce que c'était plus fin et parce que c'était sa femme, à lui, qu'il avait eue vierge. [1]

Even if Bubu's character is more fragmented than Philippe was willing to admit to Ruyters, compared to the other figures Bubu is admittedly the superior force. Philippe plays off the latent brutality in his hero against the weakness of the other characters. The product of this interaction with Pierre and Louis is satire; with Berthe the result is pathos.

Pierre has none of Bubu's complexity and is a mere vehicle for that emotionalism, if rather more Christian in expression, already encountered in La Mère et l'enfant. Philippe's "incertitude" prevented him from cutting himself completely free from this cumbersome legacy, and Pierre's attitudes---sentimental by any measure---appear ridiculous when juxtaposed

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.61. Léon-Paul Fargue recognised this other aspect of the hero's nature, remarking that, "Bubu était le marlou d'avant la guerre, relativement sage et presque sentimental." (See Léon-Paul Fargue, Le Piéton de Paris, p.155.).

with the virility of Bubu. The effect can be appreciated by considering just two, remarkably similar, examples of Pierre's solicitude for the young prostitute.

> Pierre regardait Berthe. Il ne disait rien. Il lui prit la main et la tenait entre ses doigts pour y faire passer de la pitié, tout simplement, ---comme ceci---pour lui faire un peu de bien. Puis ils partirent. Il l'emmena chez lui, et dans la rue il lui gardait la main pour que personne ne vînt la toucher. Il se penchait vers elle, il y joignait deux mots pour qu'elle sentît bien que c'était comme cela:
> ---Ma chère petite amie, ma chère petite amie! (p.191).

> Il se coucha à son côté. Il la mit dans ses bras où elle était froide, de la tête aux pieds, comme une tempête de glace, comme un champ de cailloux où les récoltes sont brisées. Il la mit sur son coeur et la tenait chaude bien longtemps avec des dévotions brûlantes, une petite plainte de pitié qui sortait comme une flamme.
> Il ne disait rien, il ne pensait pas à la femme, il s'entourait lui-même de cette douleur et il avait bien envie de crier:
> ---Pauvre petite sainte! pauvre petite sainte! (p.211).

Frequently Philippe intensifies the satirical effect by compounding maudlin sentiment with Christian fervour. The result approaches the intolerable religiosity characteristic of Tolstoy's last novels. [1].

1. Compare the following reflections of Prince Nekhlyodov on his attempt to restore Maslova's self-respect with the conversation between Pierre and Louis about Berthe's salvation: "He knew this much only---she had changed and that the change was an important one for her, drawing him closer not only to her but to Him in Whose name the transformation was being accomplished. And this union lifted him into a state of joyous humility." (Resurrection, Penguin Books, London 1976, p.318.)

> Et je pensais à Berthe, mon Pierre, à cause de Jésus au Jardin des Olives. Le Christ en son dernier jour a pu

Berthe, too, is a 'flat' character but if, as Michel Arnauld suggested, her lack of depth precludes any real tragedy the pathos in Philippe's portrayal of her is undeniable. She is destined to be a victim, not only because the world is full of those waiting to take advantage of her naïveté but also because of the apathy of those who properly ought to defend her. Berthe's own father, overwhelmed by what he recognised as superior social forces, had watched impassively his daughter's decline. "Il ne s'en inquiéta pas davantage parce que, étant père de sept enfants, il avait eu beaucoup de mal et il avait appris que la vie est plus forte que nos volontés." [1]. Philippe sacrificed innocence to a growing Nietzschean imperative in his writing but did not do so without a certain amount of genuine regret. These moments when his conviction apparently faltered are responsible for some of the most successful passages in the novel. They possess a lyric quality far removed from the facile emotionalism present elsewhere and are all the more effective for the subdued common sense with which, here, Berthe is seen to contemplate her lot:

> Quant à l'amour, elle avait trop usé.
> Elle savait de quoi se compose l'amour

> pleurer, mais la Bonne Parole n'est pas morte. Les dormeurs l'avaient gardée, car l'Esprit est fort si la Chair est faible [...] Et nous, mon ami, une fille publique nous a trouvés. Nous lui apprendrons que sa vie n'est pas bonne et nous mettrons un peu plus de bonté dans la nôtre pour qu'elle la comprenne et pour qu'elle l'aime [...] Si nous échouons, mon frère, consolons-nous en pensant que nous aurons mis un peu de lumière en son âme et que nous ignorons si nous ne sommes pas au commencement de son salut. (Bubu de Montparnasse, p.194.).

1. Bubu de Montparnasse, p.53.

> depuis qu'elle laissait les mâles après elle courir, qui profitent de toutes les faiblesses et satisfont tous leurs besoins. Elle savait qu'il faut convertir l'amour en espèces, car l'amour est fatigant, et c'est l'argent qui réconforte. Tout cela, Berthe le savait à vingt ans. [1].

Even when her actions appear morally reprehensible she is exonerated in light of the social pressures ranged against her. When, for example, she leaves the clinic uncured of her syphilis intending to warn the men with whom she sleeps, her resolve is quickly conquered by the necessity to earn a living. Her sense of the practical again appears to the reader more disarming than ruthless: "Puis il fallut manger, puis la pitié n'est pas d'un usage quotidien." [2].

Philippe's prevarication is such that the victory represented by Bubu's repossession of Berthe cannot be absolute. It cannot wipe from the reader's mind the suffering Berthe is seen to have endured nor make entirely ridiculous Pierre's well intentioned efforts on the girl's behalf. Nor does it alter the fact that the fatality of *milieu* and *moment* cannot be eluded completely. A limited resistance can be offered---and Bubu has offered it---but he is ultimately as much a product and victim of social circumstance as the others.

In a novel so faithfully autobiographical as *Bubu*, one is perhaps more than usually justified in seeking answers to literary problems among the events of the author's own life. Certainly the oscillation between the poles of *pitié* and *volonté* in the novel seems to have its counterpart in a hypocritical side to Philippe's nature. His attitude towards

1. *Bubu de Montparnasse*, p.80.
2. *Ibid.*, p.172.

women was, to say the least, ambiguous and helps explain the conflicting presence of both a desire to protect as well as a compulsion to dominate them. His correspondence, and especially that with Vandeputte, records a succession of love affairs and is full of the enthusiasms one would expect to find. He was, however, always extremely sensitive about his lack of stature and a minor disfiguration of the lower jaw, and the slightest hint of rejection by a woman provoked exaggerated reactions. Writing to Vandeputte in 1897, the mere fact that he was depressed at returning to Paris from his parents' village was enough to precipitate this outburst: "Je voudrais vivre jusqu'à la fin dans cette petite ville de province, auprès d'eux, à m'ennuyer et à les sentir vivre et passer. Je me fous des femmes, je les hais, je voudrais les mordre, et qu'elles en crèvent, je voudrais que Paris n'existe pas." [1] In a letter written the following year it was his lack of money to entertain women that prompted him to write:

> Il me semble maintenant que les femmes sont des bijoux étonnants que peuvent seuls s'offrir les gens très riches /.../ En particulier, en bloc, je les déteste /.../ Il est bien certain que je ne m'intéresserais à aucune douleur féminine, et que si je m'en occupais ce serait plutôt pour l'accroître que pour la soulager. [2]

This sort of suppressed hostility helps explain why, with the exception of his mother, the female figures in his novels--- Berthe (Bubu), Marie (Marie Donadieu) and Angèle (Croquignole) ---are used as mere tools by which the male characters are defined and developed. [3]

1. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.56.
2. Ibid., Letter of 15 May 1898, p.85.
3. Philippe showed himself less than honourable in his dealings with at least two of his women. His thoughtless treatment of one, a sempstress called Milie, led

Philippe's attitude toward prostitutes was particularly ambiguous. Despite his indignation, amply expressed in his letters to Vandeputte at the time he was planning Bubu, at the social pressures which forced girls into prostitution he was not above exploiting them himself. In his volume of memoirs Francis Jourdain recounted a curious incident which well illustrates this ambivalence, and which took place on an outing to the country he made with Philippe and some other friends. At one point the conversation turned to prostitutes and Philippe insisted that his companions took him to the nearest brothel.

> Je le vois encore dans le pauvre et hideux salon, se livrant en bras de chemise à mille facéties dont la vulgarité m'offusquait bien moins que ne me surprenait la gaie désinvolture de mon ami [...] J'eus une espèce de frisson en surprenant le regard dont ---reprenant pour une seconde son sérieux---il enveloppe la nudité d'une des pensionnaires. Ni ivresse, ni fièvre, aucune concupiscence, le regard experimenté du connaisseur, ou plutôt, seulement le regard de l'acheteur, le regard qui jauge, qui évalue le bétail. Très calme, Philippe pesait la viande [...] Cela dura le temps de l'éclair. J'ai dit que le sang-froid de Philippe m'avait parfois étonné. Ce jour-là, il me fit peur. [1].

Maria Tixier, the model for Berthe, was herself a prostitute Philippe had picked up in the streets. In the novel, Pierre's initial meeting with Berthe culminates in sexual intercourse and as a result he lacks a certain credibility

> to her early death, while his final mistress was the wife of a close friend. (See Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.198.).

1. Francis Jourdain, Sans Remords ni rancune, p.154. Compare the article by Charles-Henry Hirsch in Mercure de France, 1 May 1911, pp.181-182: "[Philippe] a une profonde et fraternelle pitié pour les misérables filles qui se vendent."

in all subsequent efforts to dissuade her from a vice he himself has helped confirm. In all the criticism dealing with Bubu de Montparnasse no one detected more accurately than Henri Bachelin the thematic ambivalence in the novel or the author's double standards which formed its foundation. He attacked this hypocritical aspect of Bubu in a short volume of criticism devoted to Philippe:

> Mais, mon cher Philippe [...] vous en êtes vous-même de cette Société. Lorsque vous cherchiez fortune, ce lendemain de Quartorze Juillet de l'année 1898, ce n'est nullement pour la „racheter„ que vous avez abordé Maria; ce fut pour „l'acheter„ à seule fin de jouir d'elle, et il ne vous déplaît pas du tout qu'il y ait des filles publiques [...] Philippe, la Société c'est vous, c'est moi, c'est nous tous. [1]

1. Henri Bachelin, Charles-Louis Philippe, son oeuvre, p.57.

Le Père Perdrix and Marie Donadieu.

If in the two subsequent novels the kind of mauvaise foi encountered in Bubu is less evident, Philippe is still uncertain about whether the Nietzschean or the Christian aspect of his thought should be given droit de cité in his fictional universe. Le Père Perdrix and Marie Donadieu not only individually demonstrate this hesitation but also, considered together, provide only slightly distorted mirror images of the pattern of character development in their common hero, Jean Bousset. In neither, as we shall see, is the confrontation of the opposites convincingly presented. Philippe introduces here no new themes although the emphasis shifts both towards more openly political statement and a discursive, less dramatic style.

On 15th May 1902 Chapter III of Le Père Perdrix appeared in La Revue blanche and the following year Fasquelle published the novel in its entirety. [1.] An extract from Marie Donadieu was included in Le Canard sauvage on 4th October 1903 and again it was Fasquelle who published the work en volume in 1904. [2.]

The plot structure of the two works is uncomplicated and charts the spiritual development of Jean Bousset from the vigorous young provincial engineer he appears at the beginning of Perdrix through his passive descent into poverty

1. The following is a list of the subsequent editions of Le Père Perdrix: A.Coq (Paris) 1921; Stock (Paris) 1948; Le Club français du livre (Paris) 1951; La Guilde du livre (Lausanne) no date. An undated Hungarian edition (Perdrix Apo) was published in Budapest by Athenaeum Kiadasa. All references in this thesis to the text are from the 1948 Stock edition.

2. All references to the text are from this 1904 edition. Further editions of Marie Donadieu were published by

by the end of the novel and the gradual reassertion of a dominant, although altered, personality which is the substance of Marie Donadieu. The titles of the novels are misleading as neither old Perdrix nor Marie can be seen as a central figure. Even in their peripheral roles there is almost no character development, both being obvious illustrations of that mute acceptance of one's condition already seen in Bubu's Berthe. Their significance derives from the fact that, in the tradition of the German Bildungsroman, they are essential contributors to Jean's spiritual education.

Dedicated "A mon parfait ami: Lucien Dieudonné" [Lucien Jean], Le Père Perdrix is divided into two parts. The first is set back in that small town atmosphere of La Mère et l'enfant which Philippe had abandoned in Bubu. Perdrix is a village blacksmith who, on the threshold of old age, is told by the local doctor that he must abandon his trade immediately if he wants to conserve his rapidly failing eyesight. Plagued also by a leg complaint the old man acquiesces and allows himself to be supported by his wife. For a while the couple is aided by an allowance from the "bureau de bienfaisance", but this subsidy is later withdrawn after a fit of pique by the tyrannical doctor, and Perdrix and his wife quickly sink to subsistence level. [1]. Jean Bousset is

Mornay (Paris 1921) and by Fasquelle (Paris) in 1922, 1923, 1928 and 1952. English translations were issued by Grey Walls Press (London 1949) and Paul Elek (London 1960). A German edition was also published by Insel-Verlag (Leipzig 1959).

1. By the turn of the century a rudimentary form of social security had penetrated even remote rural communities. Philippe's description of the Perdrix ménage provides an interesting glimpse of the charity dispensed by the State to ageing

introduced as the son of Perdrix's nephew Pierre, the local cartwright, and in several respects is the parallel of the author himself. He had been the recipient of a government bourse for needy children and studied both at a lycée and the Ecole Centrale. His education completed, he became an engineer in a provincial chemical factory and enjoys a relatively easy existence on his 4000 francs a year.

The second part of the novel begins with Jean's deliberate destruction, at the age of twenty-two, of his career prospects by taking the side of the workers in a pay dispute with the management of which he is a part. He is present as a delegation arrives to present the modest demand for an increase from 3 francs 10 sous per day to 4 francs and is suddenly overcome, quite inexplicably in the opinion of some critics, by a sense of his own class background. When the workers' demands are dismissed out of hand he refuses, unlike the men themselves, to accept the verdict in silence and is dismissed. His father disowns him for what he considers his son's ingratitude for the family sacrifices made on his behalf and Jean is taken in by old Perdrix. He remains there until Perdrix's wife dies, exhausted by her attempts to earn enough to keep the three of them. In a rural community where the highest possible importance is attached to productive labour, the two idle men receive increasingly hostile criticism from the villagers and Jean decides to move to the capital, taking the old man

> couples with no visible means of support. "Ils eurent tous les samedis un pain de dix livres, furent exemptés d'impôts, participèrent aux distributions de secours; pour le Quatorze Juillet cinq francs, à cause du terme, et au commencement de l'hiver ils avaient droit à un stère de bois." (Le Pere Perdrix, p.44.)

with him. Like Pierre Hardy and Louis Buisson he takes a minor clerical post with a railway company whose salary provides only the barest essentials. The final pages of the novel chart the last stages of the descent into a state of apathy confirmed rather than dissipated by the desperate poverty of the two characters. Perdrix becomes increasingly aware that it is the burden of his presence which guarantees the future misery of his young friend and he drowns himself in the Seine.

Philippe, spurred on by the humilitation he suffered at the hands of a woman who had deceived him, set out in Marie Donadieu to restore the vitality he had progressively stripped from his hero in Le Père Perdrix. The absence of a significant female character in Perdrix is rectified by the creation of Marie. As we have seen, Philippe's attitude to women was ambivalent and the heartless manner in which Marie is used in this novel, written after the souring of one of the author's love affairs, is not surprising. Not only is she willingly sacrificed, like Berthe, to aid the moral rehabilitation of the hero but also to appease the author's own affronted sensibilities and that general desire for revenge on the female sex already noted in his correspondence.

The novel is divided into three parts and its most distinguishing characteristic is that it is almost completely devoid of action. Anyone familiar with the previous novels will have little difficulty in recognising the themes at work, but Philippe appears to have abandoned any sustained attempt to dramatise them. The author's indifference to creating even a token vraisemblance of time and place inhibits

attempts to understand the characters and erodes any stature the work might otherwise have as a roman psychologique. The characters are instead manoeuvred into position with a minimal amount of attendant action and made to speak their lines. Any increase in the precision with which Philippe could develop his philosophical proposals was more than offset by the harm this sort of artifice did to his claim that Marie Donadieu was a viable novel.

If any plot line at all is to be detected it is found in the first part, set in Lyon, which describes the development of Marie from infancy to the age of seventeen. Abandoned by her mother who has left home with a young captain to avoid the father's drunken excesses, the girl is left in the care of her grandfather Basile. Although a farm foreman, he saves enough money to send Marie to a convent school. Upon her release she falls in love with Raphaël Crouzat, a contractor's son and a student doing his military service in Lyon, and at the age of seventeen loses her virginity to him. When Raphaël declares his intention to return to Paris, Marie's aunt Melanie devises an elaborate trick to persuade the grandfather to allow Marie to go and work in the capital.

The second part of the novel is placed in Paris and develops the relationship between Marie, Jean and Raphaël. Philippe makes little effort to suggest the urban atmosphere, as he had done successfully in Bubu, and most of the section is composed of a series of conversations held in the hotel room of either Jean or Raphaël. Jean has continued in the post he took when supporting Perdrix and which has quartered the salary he had drawn as an engineer. He meets Raphaël, a friend from his lycée days, by chance in the street one day

after work. Raphaël invites him back to the room where he is living with Marie and the beginning of their triangular relationship is established. The girl, preferring to be kept by a man, has chosen not to work and, although she takes part in the often esoteric exchanges on love and friendship, is seen as little more than a moderately intelligent Berthe. When Raphaël returns for a month's holiday to Lyon she immediately moves into Jean's rooms where the two live "comme mari et femme". During this time Jean convinces himself that he loves the girl and is deeply affected when his friend returns, much in the manner of Bubu, to take Marie south to Lyon. It is this confrontation of the two men in Paris which provides the thematic climax of the novel. Jean is forced to consider the aimlessness of his way of life in the light of Raphaël's dynamism in taking what he wants. This marks the beginning of Jean's climb back to a form of that power and competence displayed at the outset of Le Père Perdrix and which to this point has gradually yielded to a resigned acceptance of 'la force des choses.'

In the final section the dénouement is rapid. Back in Lyon with her aunt, Marie meets her mother whom she has believed dead for twenty years. On the recommendation of this woman of the world she returns to Paris and Jean. The young man, however, having been given time to think, rejects her as a prize not worthy of his revitalised powers. The dismissal is civilised, but brutal: "Mon pauvre camarade, tu m'as beaucoup servi. Mais il va falloir que tu partes." [1].

1. Marie Donadieu, Paris 1904, p. 315.

Why Le Père Perdrix should have attracted very little critical appraisal is impossible to answer with any degree of precision. Marie Donadieu, a much inferior work, provoked more response simply because it was a patently unsatisfactory novel. It could be that, after the enthusiastic reception given Bubu, critical expectations were dampened by Perdrix which was in effect an anti-climax. [1] There was little stylistically or thematically new to capture the public's imagination. Philippe's style still consisted of that combination of the naturalistic and the precious used with mixed success in both La Mère et l'enfant and Bubu. The setting may have reverted to the countryside but the idiom used by both the characters and the narrator remained distinctly Parisian. The same themes as in the earlier novels were reused here but elucidated with less imagination and subtlety.

This was the substance of Henri Ghéon's reservations expressed in a review written for L'Ermitage. [2] Whereas he had admired the construction of Bubu de Montparnasse, in

1. Even Philippe's friends, normally generous with their opinions, remained for the most part silent on Perdrix. Eugène Montfort did react favourably but his only pronouncement on the novel was in a letter to Philippe which distinguished itself by its lack of critical insight. "C'est plein de talent, plein d'observation, plein de vie vraie. C'est juste. C'est fort. Ça, c'est un roman mon vieux." (Letter of 1904, Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin No.18, December 1960, p.376.) A letter to Philippe by André Ruyters, after the appearance of the extract published in La Revue blanche, criticised "une sorte d'apathie" in the characters of Perdrix. This prompted a defence from the author which illuminates his intentions for the novel and will be examined at a later point.

2. January 1903, pp.73-75.

which the thematic balance was maintained by the three central figures, he considered that Perdrix suffered from the centralisation of the conflict in a single character, "[...] aux dépens de quelques marionnettes secondaires, souvent excellemment, mais sommairement dessinées." Although Ghéon made this essential point well, he was on less secure ground when he identified Perdrix, and not Jean, as the central character with whose development Philippe is chiefly concerned. We shall see to what extent it was Philippe's exaggerated emphasis on the character of Jean --- and not that of the old man --- which strained the credibility of both Le Père Perdrix and Marie Donadieu.

In his short review of the novel Ghéon made one further observation whose soundness is confirmed by even a cursory examination of the text. Although Philippe's portrayal of the moral and material deprivation of the village poor is convincing and, on occasion, moving, his touch is less sure when he ventures beyond the narrowly delineated boundaries of this class. The vice of the doctor Edmond Lartigaud and his family, for example, is exaggerated to the point of caricature, and it was this sort of lapse in Philippe's sense of moderation that prompted Ghéon to comment that, "La [...] fausse note est dans la voix des Lartigaud; en parlant des bourgeois, M. Philippe ne sait pas accepter d'être pauvre, parlant des pauvres; il cesse de se montrer impartial." In a review of Marie Donadieu written the following year, his opinion of Perdrix appeared more indulgent.[1]

1. See L'Ermitage, December 1904, pp.296-299. "Le Père Perdrix [...] nous déçut par des gaucheries, des trous et plusieurs fautes d'équilibre. Mais de quelle richesse, de quelle ampleur s'y montrait capable l'auteur!" Although not retracting the earlier criticisms, and re-stating his view that Philippe was not

Ghéon was not alone in observing that Philippe was most successful when dealing with that stratum of French society he knew best: the rural townsfolk. In his preface to Perdrix Jean Vaudal remarked that, as impressive an achievement as Bubu de Montparnasse had signalled, Philippe's own background imposed on his characters a certain stiffness of action and speech in their urban environment. "Mais Bubu, c'est Paris, et, malgré qu'il en ait, l'enfant de Cérilly est toujours quelque peu touriste dans la grande ville." [1.]

It was Philippe's compatriot Emile Guillaumin, in his article "Charles-Louis Philippe en Bourbonnais", who made the important distinction between paysan and villageois when considering the author's rural characters. Although on occasion Philippe attempted to portray the middle class mentality, which could be observed equally well within the confines of a small town as in the capital, in none of his novels did he take as his subject, as Zola had done, the true French peasant tied to the land. "Le bourg et les champs, en Bourbonnais, sont deux parties très distinctes, d'un tout qui est la commune. [Philippe] ignorait presque la seconde et rarement il se risqua à parler des paysans qui vivent épars dans les fermes et les hameaux, mais il connaissait à fond la première, où il était né, où s'était écoulée son enfance." [2.] It can be argued convincingly

> at home among the middle class, he emphasised the uniqueness in the description of provincial life as the author himself had experienced it, "[...] la vie du peuple, non la vie des bourgeois qu'il imagine mal."

1. Le Père Perdrix, Stock, Paris 1948, p.xxix.

2. Emile Guillaumin, "Charles-Louis Philippe en Bourbonnais", Nouvelle Revue Française, No.XIV, 15 February 1910, p.216.

that Philippe's significance derives from the quality of his reaction against the brutality in the naturalists' vision of the workers. Without consecrating himself to 'art social' or a conscious attempt to vindicate the proletariat, his interest in the psychological motivation in his characters' actions and his method of proceeding from their vie intérieure to the vie extérieure was exactly the opposite of that of Maupassant and Zola, tending to provoke sympathy rather than mere curiosity or revulsion from the reading public. Although in his study on Maupassant, Paul Vernois discerned this 'civilising' element in Philippe's treatment of his subject, the misapplication of the label "paysan" was a serious one when he maintained that "[...] Un paysan tout neuf venait d'accéder à la vie littéraire, paysan de Charles-Louis Philippe qui, au début du XX^{e} siècle, s'affirmait en réaction directe contre les brutes de Maupassant." [1].

1. Paul Vernois, "Maupassant, auteur rustique", Travaux de linguistique et de littérature, Vol.2, Strasbourg 1964, p.125. Compare the following editorial comment in Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe (Bulletin no.23, December 1965) on this difference of approach to the working class in Maupassant and Philippe. The editor singles out for comparison with Le Pere Perdrix Maupassant's story "Père Amable": "Il n'y a donc pas opposition formelle entre les deux écrivains. Mais si la lecture du conte du „Père Perdrix„, si un souci de vérité et d'objectivité anime Maupassant et Philippe, si tous les deux nous font partager la vie primitive du village, il n'est pas moins juste de reconnaître sous l'humour, la finesse et parfois la gravité [chez Philippe] un sentiment de sympathie à l'égard des personnages qui n'est pas perceptible chez Maupassant. Quand Philippe conte, on le voit sourire derrière ses lunettes." (p.43.).

Rachilde, too, endorsed the humanitarian tone to Philippe's descriptions of rural and urban squalor. [1.] In particular she praised what she considered the author's unique talent for transforming the banal details of monotonous individual existences into vehicles which expressed a much wider concern for social justice: "Si les romanciers naturalistes avaient voulu comprendre le réalisme de cette façon-là! Mais les réalistes d'antan n'eurent jamais le sentiment de la pitié sociale à ce noble point." It was the creation of this compassionate naturalism which allowed her to overcome her expressed reservations about the current vogue for 'kerbside novels' and to recommend Perdrix to the public. "J'admire qu'au courant de ce livre on puisse dire Merde comme chez Zola. Seulement, la fange remuée sous la plume de l'auteur du père Perdrix a des parfums de fleur, de cette fleur qui est la Charité, l'humanité par excellence."[2.]

She showed herself no less enthusiastic in her praise for Marie Donadieu. [3.] Again approving Philippe's preference for the symbolic over the picturesque, Rachilde commented in particular on his success in transforming the dubious morality of Marie into "la plus noble des matières". Her enthusiasm for the novel was almost uncompromising but her one reservation, although undoubtedly understated, captured its fundamental

1. See her review of Le Père Perdrix in Mercure de France, February 1903, pp.472-473.

2. Compare the article by Lucien Maury in La Revue bleue, 6 August 1910. "/.../ L'on dirait parfois /un/ Zola sentimental et spirituel avec décence." (p.189.).

3. See her review in Mercure de France, December 1904, pp.727-728.

weakness. While maintaining that "Tout est appétissant, si bien présenté", she admitted that, "Par instants, ils parlent un langage trop essentiel, c'est tout ce qu'on peut leur reprocher." [1.]

Only Philippe's friends were willing to give Marie Donadieu unqualified endorsement. Emile Guillaumin, referring to Jean's final rejection of Marie, maintained that "[...] cette victoire de l'esprit sur la chair donne à l'oeuvre une conclusion d'une grandeur émouvante." [2.] Similarly, Valery Larbaud did his reputation as a critic no good by his verdict that the novel represented "[...] la biographie de femme la plus complète peut-être qu'on ait jamais écrite." [3.] Anna de Noailles also claimed to appreciate the work and wrote to Philippe, "Je tiens à vous dire combien cette phrase touchante me fut sensible hier, tandis qu'avec ma soeur, à haute voix, je relisais Marie Donadieu et que je m'arrêtais sans pouvoir m'en aller, à ces deux pages qui font mon bonheur. Je ne puis vous dire combien ce livre enrichit mon coeur." [4.]

1. In an unsigned article on the first English translation of Donadieu (Grey Walls Press, London 1949) the reviewer made a similar observation about the dangers of the stylisation in Philippe's technique." Marie Donadieu has been pruned of all irrelevances and the essence alone remains [...] Philippe has the gift of compression; sometimes the speed with which he passes from one poetic image to another involves the obscurity that often results from intense concentration." (Times Literary Supplement, 7 October 1949, p.645.).
2. Emile Guillaumin, "Un Artiste de la douleur et de la bonté: Charles-Louis Philippe", La Revue hebdomadaire, 30 September 1911, p.659.
3. Valery Larbaud, Ce Vice impuni la lecture, p. 301.
4. No date, probably 1904. Musée Charles-Louis Philippe, Cérilly. Reproduced in Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.20, pp.476-477.

The majority of serious criticism was unfavourable. The novel was attacked both for the imbalance of its long sequences of dialogue and for the artificial nature of the language employed. Henri Bachelin captured the general tenor of the criticism when he complained that, "Trop de belles phrases---et de trop belles y sont prononcées pour qu'on n'ait pas l'impression d'être hors de la réalité, même la plus sublimée." [1]. Jules Bertaut, writing in the Revue hebdomadaire, regretted this tendency and the lapses of continuity in the narrative to which an overconcentration of philosophical discussion gave rise. Admitting his admiration for the earlier Bubu and Perdrix, he made the following observation: "L'auteur a-t-il voulu raffiner sur sa manière? A-t-il prétendu faire plus original que son originalité même? C'est là une dangereuse tendance qui mène tout droit à la littérature artificielle [...] Ici, il y a des trous profonds, une absence de continuité dans le récit qui choque et qui lasse. Des pages entières sont d'une belle venue, d'autres sont informes, quelques-unes ne sont pas écrites en français." [2]. Franz Kafka, who had been given a copy of Donadieu by Milena, his close friend and translator of the early short stories into Czech, was similarly struck by the wide variation in the quality of the prose. Although obviously unenthusiastic he seemed willing, in one letter at least to Milena, to allow Philippe the benefit of the doubt and to blame the translation rather than the author:

1. Henri Bachelin, Charles-Louis Philippe, son oeuvre, p.43.

2. November 1904, p.352.

"I've started Donadieu, but so far have read only very little, I can't quite get into it, even the little I've read by him before didn't move me very much [...] The best of what I have read so far (I'm still in Lyons) seems to me characteristic of France, rather than of Philippe, a weak reflection of Flaubert [...] The translation reads as though done by 2 translators, once in a while very good, then again bad to the point of incomprehensibility." [1.] From another letter written shortly afterwards it is clear that Kafka's estimation of the novel did not improve upon reflection: To-day I read a larger section of the Donadieu, but I can't get on with it [...] The solemn unsolemnity, the embarrassed unembarrassment, the admiring irony of the book---none of it do I like. When Raphaël seduces the Donadieu it's very important to her, but what business has the author in the student's room, and even less so the fourth person, the reader, until the little room turns into a lecture hall of the medical or psychological faculty. And besides, there's so little else in the book but despair. [2.]

We have already noted the hostile opinion Stuart Merrill and T.S. Eliot had of the artificiality in all the post Bubu novels and, especially, in Marie Donadieu. Henri Ghéon, who had admitted to being impressed by the balance Philippe achieved between realism and lyricism in Bubu, condemned the lack of a similar equilibrium in Marie Donadieu. Philippe had dissipated the psychological credibility of his characters by destroying their independence. He insulated them almost

1. No date. Franz Kafka, Letters to Milena, Willi Haas (ed.), London 1953, p.231.
2. No date, but written in the early 1920's and before May 1923. Franz Kafka, Letters to Milena, p.233.

completely from their physical environment, plunging them into a world of verbal abstractions where they served as mere vehicles to convey his own reflections. [1].

Ernest-Charles, in a brief review article on Philippe's works from La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie to Marie Donadieu, made exactly the same evaluation as Ghéon. [2]. The author's expansiveness was too sophisticated to be credited to such humble characters and their credibility as self-sustaining elements of the narrative collapsed. "[...] Je ne suis point surpris si Charles-Louis Philippe discerne des rapports que je n'aperçois pas, mais je m'étonne que Marie Donadieu et sa mère, personnes simples au demeurant, puissent, pendant cinquante pages, échanger des propos que je ne suis pas apte à comprendre [...] Quelquefois, les héros de Charles-Louis Philippe parlent comme des livres." In his journal entry for 5 January 1914 Arnold Bennett recorded similar impressions of a reading of Marie Donadieu. Like both Ghéon and Ernest-Charles before him he was unimpressed by Philippe's attempts at philosophical sophistication: "Finished Marie Donadieu in the night. On the whole it is not as good as Bubu [...] They nearly all talk too much. And they nearly all talk as Jean alone (and the author himself) would really have talked." [3].

On 12th October 1900, in a letter to Vandeputte, Philippe made his first reference to the novel that was to

1. See L'Ermitage, December 1904, p.298.
2. See La Revue bleue, 26 November 1904, pp.694-698.
3. The Journals of Arnold Bennett, Newman Flower (ed.), Vol.II, p.77.

succeed Bubu. "Le 3 novembre à 9 heures du soir, je dois commencer l'écriture de mon nouveau bouquin qui se passera dans mon patelin. Histoire de vieux pauvre qui dégringole l'échelle des misères, de jeune ingénieur anarchiste et de bourgeois alcoolique." [1]. By the end of the year Philippe could be more precise about the general pattern of the work and the nature of its central character:

> /Bubu/ a pour replaçant, sur la table où je travaille presque (?) chaque soir, un vieux pauvre /.../ et un bon type qui vient d'être reçu à l'Ecole Centrale. Il s'appelle Jean Bousset et je l'aime bien. Tu verras, mon vieux frère, ça fera un sale anarcho et je ferai brûler pour lui le bazar de la Charité. Il a un bien beau coeur, mais pas tout de suite. Ça lui prend en pensant à la misère des ouvriers et à la solitude de son coeur. Que va-t-il devenir? [2].

From the above indications it appears that originally Philippe envisaged Jean as an extension, and magnification, of the esprit volontaire presented by Bubu. The latter's disregard for social convention was to be inflated to embrace anarchism, although with the hint of the subsequent development of a more humane social conscience.

On the face of it, effecting such a reconciliation between wholesale destruction and a positive class commitment seems fraught with problems, and ultimately the figure of Jean which emerges in Le Père Perdrix has little in common with the author's initial intentions. As uncertain as ever about whether the scale should be weighted in favour of force or résignation, Philippe changed his mind about the nature of

1. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.144

2. Ibid., Letter of 31 December 1900, p.145.

the balance to be struck and chose to emphasise the passive aspect of his characters. In a letter to André Ruyters, after Perdrix had been completed, he acknowledged the subsequent change in direction the novel had taken from that expressed at the outset:

> La première idée que j'avais eue de Jean Bousset était de lui faire jeter une bombe dans un endroit de Paris que je sais. Mais lorsque, plus tard, j'ai mieux embrassé mon sujet, j'ai senti combien la pauvreté devait tuer la force en lui. Et j'en ai fait le fils d'une race de pauvres et l'égal du père Perdrix. [1.]

He did not, on his own admission, intend to present an apology for this sort of resignation. Whereas the futility of Pierre and Louis, when contrasted with Bubu's dynamism, had served both to parody itself and embellish its opposite, Philippe hoped to achieve a similar didactic purpose by concentrating on just one half of the conflict between the volonté and résignation. The example of Jean and Perdrix would point its own moral lesson. In the letter to Ruyters he responded to his friend's expressed dismay at the pessimism in the novel. While implicitly forestalling the charge of "incertitude" by acknowledging that the philosophical content of his novels was still in formation ("[...] tu raisonnes mon cas comme si j'étais un écrivain à la fin de sa carrière"), he maintained that, "Tout ce que tu me reproches est volontaire. J'ai voulu montrer dans le Père Perdrix une résignation condamnable." [2.]

1. Charles-Louis Philippe, "Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, 15 February 1910, p.249. The emphasis is mine.

2. Ibid.

Philippe fulfilled only half this task he set himself. Undoubtedly he presents the reader with a study in the individual's willingness to accept adversity, although often this study falters because of the author's inability to provide a credible chain of psychological cause and effect. Philippe failed, however, to portray this attitude as "condamnable". His attempt was frustrated by the absence of an appropriate foil, such as had existed in Bubu, around which could be developed the moral point he was trying to make. The concept of the individual's free will has only a precarious foothold in this novel and its destruction is not in itself sufficiently important to discredit the antithesis. Jean alone contains the kernel of the conflict between volonté and destinée. He alone possesses any degree of that intellectual independence necessary to oppose the inertia which makes one suppose the social laws unalterable. Unfortunately, his greatest triumph over "la force des choses"---his rise from the son of a village cartwright to become a successful chemical engineer---is conveyed in a few expositive lines before the character himself has been actively introduced.

When Jean does appear it is, paradoxically, to destroy his achievement by a dramatic exercise of that volonté which has previously only been sketched in the vaguest possible terms. The scene in which Jean takes the workers' side in their pay dispute has considerable dramatic potential which is wasted by this inadequate preparation of the character.

> Une porte s'ouvrait d'un seul élan. Nous avons du moins l'insolence, nous les pauvres, et les coups de gueule, puisque leurs armes arrêtent nos coups de dents. Je suis parti comme eux. Ils baissaient la tête et pensaient. Moi, j'ai crié. Je me suis retourné et j'ai crié: „Merde!„ [1].

1. Le Père Perdrix, Paris 1948, p.102.

Arguably admirable, Jean's deliberate action to rid himself of a strength based on monetary and social superiority is difficult for the reader to accept, given the presentation of the character up to that point. This lack of psychological credibility inevitably mars the rest of the work which is concerned with the chain of consequences of this one act. In an attempt to redress the balance Philippe briefly introduced, for the first time in his writing, the suggestion of a hereditary determinism. When Jean tries to explain his behaviour to his father he does so in terms approaching Zola's hérédité du sang: "C'est alors, mon père, que je me suis senti ton fils et que je me suis rappelé tes mains, ton dos qui travaille et les roues des voitures." [1] The perfunctory appearance of this concept of motivation, more explicitly elaborated in Marie Donadieu, fails to convince and does not render any more comprehensible Jean's rapid descent into squalor.

If the disintegration of Jean's will to act is puzzling, it does not necessarily appear blameworthy. It was in particular the portrayal of the old man that thwarted Philippe's expressed aim to prove his characters culpable. It is one of the novel's principal flaws that so much attention was devoted to a secondary and patently two dimensional figure. Perdrix is too obviously a symbol of that abdication of individual responsibility which Jean also represented, but his fatalism is total and without trace of bitterness. Workers were intended to suffer, and his reaction to the news of Jean's dismissal for questioning that certainty is a summary of the

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.102.

philosophical dictum Philippe intends him to embody: "Oh! mon ami, tu es un vieux bêta [...] Pourquoi t'en mêler? Il faut laisser les malheureux pour ce qu'ils sont." [1].

Even the villagers half consciously associate the spectre of the crippled blacksmith wandering their streets with some sort of divine and unavoidable retribution. "Chacun le sentait flotter autour de sa maison, l'attendait à sa porte et regardait par les vitres quelque coup d'aile, on ne sait quoi du vieux Destin qui rôde au-dessus de nos toits, descend et nous abat avec simplicité." [2]. Perdrix does not benefit from that complexity of character, albeit shallow, allowed the young man and plays no part at all in the thematic progression. He participates in the action only insofar as the responsibility of caring for him hastens Jean's decline. Philippe exploited Perdrix primarily for his picturesque value and on occasion did this effectively enough to convey a degree of pathos it is unlikely he ever intended, adding to his brand of realism that humanitarian dimension already detected by Rachilde. If he meant to portray the resignation of his characters as blameworthy he erred in erecting in their path an insurmountable barrier of circumstance. Had the slightest alternative been open to Perdrix then there would have been opportunity for real character development, and his lack of response might then indeed have appeared reprehensible. His actions, however, are so completely ordered by poverty's laws of cause and

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.106.
2. Ibid., p.41.

effect that the most likely reaction from the reader is sympathy and not censure. On several occasions the forces ranged against the old man appear so totally superior that Philippe succeeds in transforming him from a caricature of apathy to a figure of genuine pathos. The most memorable of these is the description of Perdrix in the procession at his wife's funeral where the weight of destiny is made visible in his ravaged features: "Il avait la tête plate, presque battue; sous son front vide les tempes avaient rentré [sic] et l'on sentait sa destinée. Il était né sans surprise pour descendre cette rue derrière un cercueil et sonner des sabots contre les pierres, pour porter les lunettes noires afin que l'on ne sût pas s'il pleurait." [1].

Elsewhere the figure of Perdrix encumbers rather than enhances the novel. His suicide is unnecessary as it adds little to the pessimism in the dénouement not already conveyed by Jean's abject existence in the capital. It is also too spectacular an end for a peripheral character and betrays the author's taste for the melodramatic already apparent in the final bedroom scene of Bubu de Montparnasse. [2]. Philippe, however, seems to have recognised the incongruity of the subject and the act, and he stripped Perdrix's death of much of its bravado by removing the element of will. Although Perdrix makes his way to the Seine with the intention of killing himself, he falls into the river after stumbling over a mooring on the quayside. At the last moment, then, he is denied this one attempt to exercise free choice, and

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.156.

2. Philippe shared this predilection with Eugène Le Roy who, notably in his Jacquou le croquant, Mademoiselle de la Ralphie and L'Ennemi de la mort tended towards descriptions of suicide, insanity and the more gruesome forms of murder.

even the final disposition of his own life is beyond his control.

If Philippe failed to integrate the figure of Perdrix into the narrative, the bourgeois characters, making a reappearance after their total absence in Bubu, are even less at home in this novel. Henri Ghéon was justified in considering Philippe's treatment of them one of the major weaknesses in this work, and his charge that the author was succumbing to personal prejudice is too easily verified. As had been the case in La Mère et l'enfant, it was the figure of the country doctor who bore the brunt of Philippe's attack. One can only conjecture that the author's childhood suffering at the hands of a charlatan had not been forgotten nor had the desire for revenge been outgrown. Among the least of the bourgeois vices is a callousness when dealing with social inferiors that Philippe saw as endemic in the middle class mentality. Dr. Lartigaud, in issuing the ultimatum to Perdrix to stop work or grow blind, exhibits a manner as rough as the justice he represents: "C'est ainsi que M.Edmond parla et il n'y avait pas moyen de le contredire, parce que les bourgeois sont si capricieux! Il eût crié, comme une fois chez un homme de la campagne: „Eh nom de Dieu, si vous ne prenez pas mes remèdes, vous crèverez.„" [1] It was Edmond Lartigaud, too, who had arranged, out of spite, to have Perdrix's welfare benefits stopped.

Under Philippe's hand the bourgeois forfeits his individuality and becomes, like Perdrix, a type. M.Edmond represents therefore not only cruelty but that most heinous of sins among the hungry poor: gluttony. Juxtaposed with

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.5.

the description of the slow starvation of Perdrix and Jean, Lartigaud's appetite for food and drink is seen as nothing short of addiction: "/.../ Sa fortune lui permettait de garnir sa table et de penser pendant chaque repas qu'il n'y avait au monde d'autres limites que celles de son ventre." [1]. Philippe's treatment of this particular social group takes one step further that gêne which Jean Vaudal detected in the author's handling of the urban type. It is difficult not to see in Perdrix a conscious vil ification of the middle classes. Nowhere is this more apparent than in the démesure with which Philippe intervenes to punish the Lartigaud family for its past misdemeanours. Not content to let M.Edmond perish from overeating and gout, Philippe calls down upon the heads of the rest of the family an impressive array of maledictions. The relevant passage is reproduced below in its entirety not only to indicate the extent to which Philippe's untempered prejudices---commendably rare in his writing---overcharged this already unbalanced novel but also to expose one of the few examples of humour, however unintentional, latent in the excesses of this most pessimistic of his works:

> Ça allait faire une drôle de maison, maintenant que l'homme n'était plus là. Quelque gars viendrait qui soûlerait la mère, qui sauterait la fille. Ça se battrait, ça danserait, on ramasserait toute la crapule du pays et /le fils/ crèverait dans un coin, avec sa bronchite, avant d'avoir tout bu. On verrait la fin des huit cent mille francs du père, les domaines vendus, des batailles à s'arracher les cheveux, des repas où mangeraient tous les cochons d'alentour. Il y aurait de tout; c'étaient des femmes à montrer leur derrière, à jeter des billets de cent francs, à insulter les gens par la fenêtre et ensuite à les faire boire. Et un beau jour, la nichée filerait sur Paris en laissant partout des dettes. [2].

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.88.
2. Ibid., p.124.

The Lartigauds are not the only representatives of middle class oppression, and Jean's cry of "Merde!" to the factory owners is as close as any of Philippe's characters ever comes to a revolutionary act against the Establishment. Although the Nietzschean principle appears in full retreat in Perdrix the author ventures several implicitly political statements more pointed than anything delivered in the earlier works. Jean's explanation of his action to his father constitutes a declaration of class solidarity, and one which contradicts the father's own ambitions for his son ("On fait élever des enfants pour en faire des bourgeois, pour qu'ils travaillent un peu moins que vous.") Occasionally the author breaks into the narrative to press home a point: "On demanda au vieux d'habiller le cadavre /de M.Edmond/ et il y regardait ce corps nu, cette bonne graisse des bons repas, cette viande moelleuse des bourgeois qui se passent la main sur le ventre en sortant de table. Ils seraient à tuer si l'argent les empêchait de mourir." [1] The authorial voice is here unmistakable, as nothing in the presentation of Perdrix's character prepares the reader to accept from his mouth such a provocative statement. This kind of intervention is rare but indicates Philippe's alternative to direct characterisation in his attempt to make overt social comment.

Jean's revolutionary zeal is short lived and Perdrix's non-existent, and here they follow in the line of Philippe's heroes from the narrator in La Mère et l'enfant to the hero of Charles Blanchard. The figure of the proletarian militant ready to take up arms in the cause of social revolution is entirely absent from Philippe's writing, as it is in all the works considered by this thesis, with the remarkable exception

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.123. The emphasis is mine.

of Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant. "All of them," writes Professor Hemmings, "'la pauvre Marie', the child in La Mère et l'enfant, Jean Bousset, Perdrix, Pierre Hardy, are poor in this world's goods; but they are also, and chiefly, the 'poor in spirit' of the Gospels. They are not revolted proletarians; like Dostoievsky himself, Philippe was incapable of painting the social rebel." [1].

The social message Philippe delivers is more often conveyed indirectly by the working of themes familiar to readers of his earlier novels. The moral ambiguity of labour, already touched upon in Bubu, is here restated. Its necessity is not questioned, for the poor, in the country as in the capital, are forced to work in order to eat. Neither is the precise nature of the work important ("[...] tous les métiers se valent pourvu qu'on arrive à manger du pain"). The talents of both Perdrix and Bubu's Berthe, dissimilar in appearance, are directed towards the same end. Neither the epithet 'honest' nor 'dishonest' can conceal the fact that, for the poor, work entails the surrender of most of one's liberty in exchange for the minimum needed to support life. This admission of the lack of a moral value in labour is a disturbing one for a working class writer and one which Philippe attempted to qualify in his final novel Charles Blanchard. He had, after all, previously conveyed to Vandeputte his confidence in its salutary effect on the individual; "Je t'ai exprimé plusieurs fois mes idées sur le travail qui nous fortifie. Il y a encore une raison de joie; c'est que nous mangeons un pain

1. F.W.J. Hemmings, The Russian Novel in France, p.160.

que nous avons gagné et qu'il faut, en toute justice, gagner le pain que l'on doit manger." [1] In Perdrix, however, he dispels the myth of a sentimental loyalty binding the artisan to his trade. "Car le travail est une malédiction, et c'est en le chassant du Bonheur que Dieu dit à l'homme: „Tu gagneras ton pain à la sueur de ton front.„" [2] When ordered to stop work, Perdrix is no better off materially than he had been fifty years earlier and the transition to enforced idleness is made with ease. His suffering is seen to derive not directly from the loss of a trade but rather from the subsequent boredom.

Another theme Philippe begins to use with increasing effectiveness is the daily preoccupation of the poor with food. This appears such an obvious point that it is surprising the earlier novels did not make use of it. In La Mère et l'enfant Philippe had been content to convey the poverty of the narrator's household by statements of fact, largely ignoring descriptive realism and making no attempt to portray the psychological effects of chronic indigence. Bubu was concerned above all with the clash of philosophies represented by the protagonists. The role of poverty was a subsidiary one providing the apparent motivation for the prostitution of Berthe over whom battle was joined. In Perdrix, however, poverty assumes a symbolic importance. In Chapter IV Philippe devotes ten of the chapter's fifteen pages to a minutely detailed description of the meal provided to celebrate a one

1. Letter of 7 March 1899. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.124.

2. Le Père Perdrix, p.52.

day reunion of Perdrix and his three children. [1] It is the only occasion on which Perdrix has the opportunity to "manger à sa fin". The pathetic importance he himself places on this fact serves as a reminder that all the nobler human aspirations are merely secondary to, and dependent on, the satisfaction of this one basic need. One of Philippe's most impressive achievements in this novel was, using the old man, to construct a psychological sketch of the pauper dimly aware of the extent of his handicap. Although his life revolves around his daily meal, Perdrix's excitement at the prospect of food is tempered by recognising in it the limit to his expectations: "A midi, il se levait avec un grand fracas pour aller manger, mais avec un chagrin d'homme du peuple pour qui la bouche est tout le plaisir et à qui le pain, les pommes de terre et l'eau rappellent qu'il n'y a rien à attendre avant le cercueil." [2]

The physical realities of village life are made to yield up the symbolic significance Philippe saw in them. His use of the poverty theme did not imply exclusive exploitation of its potential for picturesque or titillating detail, as the naturalists had often understood it, but rather depended on a competent developing of the chosen symbols. In Perdrix he established himself more firmly than he had done in the earlier works mid way between the concret absolu of the naturalists and the abstractions of the romanciers psychologues. The

1. Compare the length and detail of the description of the luncheon at the inn given by Croquignole to his friends. (Croquignole, Paris 1923, pp.66-67.).

2. Le Père Perdrix, p.59.

significance of 'le pain' in particular was again taken up and much more exhaustively treated in the final work, Charles Blanchard. [1].

Philippe was not always successful in establishing a workable balance between the concrete and the abstract. The major flaw in Marie Donadieu was the ascendancy that the general gained at the expense of the tangible and particular. In that novel this imbalance took form in a series of arid discussions between the characters, which seriously impaired the novel's viability. When Philippe's judgment falters in Perdrix, however, it is often as a result of his failure to choose the appropriate concrete symbol. Whereas the elements of the peasants' simple diet could with relative ease be integrated into some general statement on poverty and mortality, a less happy choice of image hindered his attempt, for example, to convey the experience of physical suffering. Taking as his point de départ Perdrix's infected leg, Philippe continues:

> Il vint un jour [...] où ce qui était une jambe douleureuse emplit le monde comme une croix du Calvaire. Il vint un jour où cela bouchait le ciel et pesait sur toute la terre [...] C'est alors que sa jambe eut de l'importance. On eût dit qu'elle pesait sur ses paupières. Autour de sa tête elle pendait du ciel et se gonflait comme des pensées qui s'accumulent et battent le temps. [2].

Here the chosen vehicle cannot possibly support the general significance Philippe was trying to make it bear. The result

1. Eugène Le Roy and Emile Guillaumin also respected the fundamental role this struggle for nourishment played in the lives of their subjects. Both the opening scene of Jacquou le croquant, in which a peasant's Christmas is contrasted with that of the châtelain, and the description of the country wedding in Guillaumin's Vie d'un simple owe their success to the peasant perspective of their authors.
2. Le Père Perdrix, pp.120; 124.

is an example of that pretentious style---here compounded with the bizarre suggestion of a leg which "pendait du ciel et se gonflait comme des pensées"---which critics from Merrill to Bachelin detected in the novels which followed Bubu.

If Philippe shunned for the most part the use of picturesque detail in describing the village and its inhabitants, he similarly refrained from any consistent use of the Bourbonnais patois to add local colour to his narrative. [1.] Dialogue is employed sparingly and although the occasional transcription does appear ("douler" for "souffrir", "renserrer" for "rentrer", "gente" for "jolie") the speech of the peasant characters remains inseparable from the careful grammar and vocabulary of the narrative. The characters, indeed, seem self-consciously aware of the literary roles they are acting out. "La prose de Philippe", wrote Jean Vaudal in his preface to Perdrix, "est une des plus musicales qui soient, non pas seulement, non pas tant par l'harmonieux arrangement des sons, mais par une efficace organisation de toutes les puissances de

1. Like all his novels, Perdrix was highly autobiographical and there is no doubt that Cérilly provided many of its characters and its setting. As early as 1895 he had confided to Marcel Ray, in a letter written from Cérilly on 16th December: "Je me console de mes désespoirs en étudiant les gens que je vois, --- et pour cela je remercie la destinée car Cérilly possède de ces types au contact desquels on apprend tous les éléments de la bêtise /.../ Je veux les vivre, me mêler à eux, concevoir toutes leurs pensées et adresser l'imagination que je puis avoir vers eux-mêmes, pour leur faire compléter le type qu'ils sont." (Les Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe, Bulletin no.23, December 1965, p.24.) Jean Giraudoux, in a reminiscence about Cérilly where he himself had lived, wrote that "Dans la maison d'en face habitaient le père Perdrix, qui s'appelait le père Galand, et la Tiennette, qui s'appelait la Rate." ("Hommage nécrologique", La Grande Revue, 10 January 1910, p.188.) Jacques de Fourchambault corroborates this and adds, "/Le père Galand/ ne voyait presque plus clair. Le docteur Vachée lui avait dit que sa vue était perdue." (Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, pp.34-36.).

signification. Quand il fait parler ses pauvres héros, il n'imite pas leurs mots et leur syntaxe, pas plus que la musique ne copie les sons naturels." [1].

Marie Donadieu is the least successful of Philippe's novels and the one from which his social concerns are the furthest removed. Only the faintest sketch of a physical setting, whether Paris or Lyon, is attempted and, despite substantial use of dialogue, at no time is the reader aware of the characters in their own right. The author is virtually talking to himself. Although Philippe was no stranger to the roman à clef, autobiographical detail here invaded the literary creation with much more damaging effect than it had done in the earlier novels. Whereas the idealisation in La Mère et l'enfant, the sentimentalism of Bubu and the vilification of the middle class in Perdrix had highlighted certain weaknesses in Philippe's talent, the literary coherence of Marie Donadieu was submerged in a flood of personal recrimination.

In January 1901 he had written to Vandeputte:

> Oh! mon vieux frère, si tu savais comme je suis amoureux! Elle est la femme d'un autre [...] qui est un ancien camarade de lycée et un ami [...] Il est allé chez lui en vacances pour le Jour de l'An et tous ces jours je les ai passés avec elle. Comme nous nous entendons, comme nous sentons bien ensemble et quelle amitié profonde nous avons l'un pour l'autre! [2].

1. Le Père Perdrix, p.xxvii. For further comment on the use of dialect in Philippe's work, see Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.118 and Emile Guillaumin, "Charles-Louis Philippe en Bourbonnais", Nouvelle Revue Française, 15 February 1910, p.214.

2. Letter of 4 January 1901. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.147.

The young woman in question was Philippe's mistress, a certain Marie-Louise, nineteen years old and, as he mentioned, the lover of one of his colleagues from the lycée. Happy enough to take advantage of the girl's infidelity, Philippe was indignant when he learned that he, in turn, had been deceived. Four months later he sent another, very different, letter to his friend:

> Mon ami qui était avec Marie avant moi est venu me voir et m'a raconté des choses extraordinaires, preuves en main [...] J'ai été la victime d'une femme d'ailleurs extrêmement intelligente, très fine, très femme, mais menteuse par hystérie, maladivement menteuse. [1].

The deception by Marie-Louise provoked resentment far greater than the distress Philippe had felt at the loss of Maria Tixier. He had, according to this letter, intended to marry the girl and a formal request had been made to her mother and grandfather. What is more significant for the development of the subsequent novel is the manner in which his disappointment is expressed. In the same letter to Vandeputte he declared himself, "[...] dégagé de tout, je suis célibataire à nouveau, je me sens plein de force pour la vie à venir, avec Nietzsche dans mon sac et tout mon tonnerre de Dieu de volonté. Car j'ai bien de la volonté, c'est même un jour sous lequel tu ne me connais pas." In January 1902, after months of brooding evidenced by his correspondence, he set to work on Marie Donadieu. [2]. It was completed in time to be considered for the 1904 Prix Goncourt

1. Letter of 30 May 1901. Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.158.

2. See his letter of 30th January 1902. "Je me suis mis depuis huit jours à un autre roman que te raconterai prochainement. J'en ai au moins pour un an." Ibid., p.16.

with Emile Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple, Marius and Ary Leblond's La Sarabande and La Maternelle by Léon Frapié, one of Philippe's co-workers at the Hôtel de Ville. [1].

It is clear that Jean is used as a vehicle for Philippe's recently rediscovered fermeté and that a process has been set in motion to reverse the decline of the hero begun in Perdrix. When Raphaël returns from Lyon to take back Marie, Jean takes the first step by recognising his own weakness in his friend's strength.

> Toute ma vie, je m'étais trompé /...7
> Il n'y a pas d'intelligence humaine,
> il y a des hommes, tu en es un. Mais
> je deviendrai un homme, Raphaël. Ne
> crains rien pour moi, je serai fort.
> Je compte beaucoup sur la force de mon
> sang. [2].

The entire effect of the novel is lost, however, because Philippe fails, as he did also in Perdrix, to establish the credibility of the hero's conversion. Throughout the preceding chapters the reader has been confronted with no succession -

1. On the first ballot Frapié received four votes, the Leblond brothers three, Guillaumin two, and Philippe one. Frapié won on the second ballot with six votes against the four polled by the Leblonds. Philippe did considerably less well than had generally been expected, and the jury's decision provoked bitter outbursts in the press from Octave Mirbeau and Philippe himself. (See Eugène Montfort, Vingt-cinq ans de littérature française:1895-1920, Paris 1922, vol.II, p.47, and Emile Guillaumin, Mon Compatriote Charles-Louis Philippe, pp.121-125.) For Lucien Jean's comments on the awarding of literary prizes in general and this Prix Goncourt in particular, see his essays "Distribution de prix" and "Le Prix Goncourt", Parmi les hommes, Paris 1910, pp.214-216. "S'ils avaient donné le prix à Ch.-L. Philippe, nous aurions tous été contents. C'eût été un chapitre de la morale en action."

2. Marie Donadieu, pp.232-233.

not to mention development - of mental states but rather with the periodic restatement of the same one. The Jean who emerges from the first sections of the novel is the ineffectual figure inherited from Perdrix. Even logical progression is difficult to follow here because the author avoids all but the most essential action and, whereas Jean's decline in Perdrix could be observed in the trivial movements of his daily life, character in Donadieu is deduced, as Jules Bertaut had complained, largely from a protracted series of conversations.

Given the personal circumstances in which Philippe undertook the novel, little ambiguity exists, as it had in Bubu about certain of the author's satirical intentions. The assault on Jean's character comes from all quarters and he stands not least condemned from his own mouth. His desire to identify and suffer with society's weak, far from appearing noble, is seen as puerile. In one of the dialogues with Marie he expresses this need in terms of a Christian self-mortification, the melodramatic and sentimental overtones of which recall the excesses of Pierre and Louis:

> Pour moi, j'eusse voulu vous apporter un corps de crucifié. Je n'ai pas assez souffert pour que vous m'aimiez. Je voudrais pouvoir m'avancer et vous dire: „Tu vois, ils m'ont porté sur la montagne. Leurs femmes et leurs petits enfants m'ont jeté des pierres, je pense que les chiens eux-mêmes ont ri. Ils m'ont crucifié jusqu'à sept fois.„ [1].

Direct authorial comment comes one step closer as Raphaël, Bubu's counterpart in this novel, is used to criticise in

1. Marie Donadieu, Paris 1904, p.176.

a less than subtle manner Jean's overdeveloped sensitivity:

> "Oui, dit Raphaël, vous êtes ainsi faits, vous autres. Vous avez si bon coeur que vous ne savez même pas où cela peut vous conduire. Et quand vous êtes à la fin, vous dites: „Ça y est, j'avais raison, j'ai marché tout droit et j'avais raison, puisque je suis arrivé.„ Seulement, vous n'arrivez jamais où vous aviez cru." [1].

The narrator himself intervenes on occasion to remark on the irresponsibility or the immaturity of his hero's actions. About Jean's reaction against his family's ambitions for him and the decision to join the ranks of the destitute he comments, "Il connut alors un singulier prurit de se rabattre encore, de trouver les siens trop hauts pour lui et de chercher jusque chez les pauvres son équilibre et sa foi. La chose n'est pas sans romantisme." [2].

However roughly, Philippe established, if not overdeveloped, the essential passiveness in Jean's character. Many of the excesses in the presentation could be overlooked had he been able to forge a credible link between the initial resignation and the ultimate triumph of the will. It was in this now familiar opposition of the two principles, embodied in Jean and Raphaël, that Marie plays out her role in the work. She, like Berthe, is the chattel that changes hands and by which the character of the hero is defined. In Raphaël's absence Jean received Marie's favours not as a consequence of any seduction on his part, but rather as a result of Marie's sensual nature. This much he unwittingly admitted in a letter to Raphaël which prompted his friend's precipitate return to the capital: "Marie et moi, nous nous aimons. Depuis les plus hauts

1. Marie Donadieu, p.218.
2. Ibid., p.77.

sommets de la vie, il me semble qu'elle soit venue à moi, par sa force et selon la pente naturelle de toutes choses." [1]. But just as there is no credible connection between the Jean the reader has come to recognise and the one who is unexpectedly converted by the example of Raphaël ("Je veux t'imiter; tu es mon maître, je te remercie, mon ami"), so the relevation to him of Marie's symbolic importance is sudden and inexplicable. In the throes of a celibate's enthusiasm over his first conquest, Jean had mistaken the pleasure of having a woman for the means by which he had come to possess her. At the outset he was convinced that her love had transformed him ("[...] Maintenant, je suis sauvé et je suis neuf. Je suis un homme d'action, Marie."). After Marie is reclaimed, however, the scales seem suddenly to fall from his eyes and an existential significance to the girl is revealed. "Je t'aimais comme une chose que j'avais reçue", he announces to her, "je ne t'aimais pas comme une chose que j'ai conquise." [2]. Far from being the ideal woman, she is rejected as a gift from that fatality with which he is trying to make a break. In future nothing would be acceptable that had not been conquered by an act of his own will. Jean's conversion seems out of context, not having developed organically from the narrative, and the reader can be forgiven if he fails to detect any fundamental difference between the pomposity of the revitalised hero and the earlier pretentious piety which Philippe was purposely attempting to satirise.

"Retiens du Père Perdrix", he had written to André Ruyters in December 1902, "que je sais faire vivre les pauvres, mais

1. Marie Donadieu, p.207. The emphasis is mine.
2. Ibid., p.292.

surtout retiens de cette lettre que je saurai faire vivre les riches et les conquérants. Je suis capable d'écrire une vie de Napoléon." [1] Philippe not so much over estimated his ability to portray the strong---he had, as we have seen, given a credible performance in the creation of Bubu---but rather he placed too high a priority on developing an isolated strain. Bubu had been necessarily involved in the unfolding action of which he was an agent and assumed credibility by being seen to be subject, if to a different degree, to the laws governing his fellow characters. Jean, on the other hand, is an ideal developed in the vacuum of abstract dialogue to which he himself contributes and which serves to provide merely the thinnest of fictional coverings for a philosophical treatise from the author.

The novel's imperfections illustrate yet another aspect of that "incertitude" exposed in the earlier works. If in Donadieu Philippe appears to have opted unequivocally for the victory of volonté over its opposite, its precise foundations seem ambiguous. In La Mère et l'enfant, Bubu and Perdrix, fatality, divine or secular, had been introduced as the one immutable element among all the variables in the equation of human experience. In the end all men succumb to its law although they are distinguishable among themselves by the quality of the resistance they are able to offer. In Donadieu, however, Philippe's representation of this central concept is less consistent, although its importance to the fictional structure is not diminished. He appears to be working with a contradiction in terms, implying laws of fatality which

1. Charles-Louis Philippe, "Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, 15 February 1910, p.251.

predetermine human activity while at the same time suggesting that certain individual types are exempt from them.

Certainly the general atmosphere of fatalism is just as pervading as that which hung over the crowded Boulevard Sébastopol that evening "au lendemain du Quatorze-Juillet." It enters the novel by implication with the Jean Bousset of Le Père Perdrix and is restated before his introduction to Raphaël and Marie. On the eve of his first chance encounter with Raphaël, Jean had left his office and stepped out into the streets. "La porte était franchie; il se campait alors, examinant les quatre coins et attendait qu'un souffle d'air vînt lui apporter sa destinée." [1.] Making their way back to the apartment where Raphaël is living with Marie, their progress is recounted in terms which reinforce the impression that the characters are little more than pieces in some higher game. "Un pas, qui suivait l'autre pas, claquait au trottoir et s'en allait encore. C'était un de ces jours que l'on ne connaît pas, que l'on n'attend pas et qui descendent tout à coup des hauteurs où le hasard les tenait suspendus." [2.] Of the novel's three characters it is Marie alone whose behaviour appears most completely determined by a pre-ordained system. For the first time in Philippe's writing the Zolaesque influence of an hérédité intérieure is fully exploited. Merely suggested as a possible explanation for the sabotage of Jean's middle class aspirations in Perdrix, from the outset of Donadieu blood determinism, of the type which helped control the behaviour of Gervaise and the Fouan family, is applied to Marie. The novel opens with an account of her father's

1. Marie Donadieu, p.78.

2. Ibid., p.81.

infidelity and the subsequent flight of the mother with a young army captain, as Philippe prepares the reader to accept profligate sexual activity as an inherited trait influencing Marie's later development. Although by virtue of her convent education, the social superior of Berthe Metenier and certainly no professional prostitute, she is governed by an identical sexual appetite which leads her to surrender her favours indescriminately to both Jean and Raphaël. In an obvious aside, the narrator makes this point explicit by commenting that, "Elle eût été intelligente sans la chaleur de son sang." [1].

If this sort of physiological determinism controls her behaviour, it has not the power Zola had given it entirely to subjugate the intellect. Marie is conscious both of the forces conspiring against her and of the futility of any attempt to resist them. In the only concession Philippe made to alleviate an otherwise unsympathetic portrait of the girl, he, again suggesting the individual as but part of a universal game, at one point rationalises Marie's actions. Upset at being mistaken one night in the street for a common prostitute, "Elle se consola [...] Il ne s'agissait même pas d'avoir du courage. Dieu, à l'origine, avait lancé son coup de pouce, la plus haute force avait cédé, le monde continuait comme un jouet mécanique mis en branle." [2]. If she cannot avoid the consequence imposed by the demands of her body, she does possess sufficient presence of mind to choose the time and place of her degradation. Nowhere does Philippe better express this unequal contest between mind and body than in

1. Marie Donadieu, p.99.

2. Ibid., p.119.

a description of Marie during that Summer when Raphaël had left Paris to spend a fortnight in the South. "Elle ne se promenait pas à Paris pendant la belle saison. Du Luxembourg à la Seine, dans l'air où les hommes se groupaient pour les plaisirs du beau temps, qu'eût-elle trouvé, sinon son corps et ses hanches et la circulation dans ses reins d'un sentiment dont elle n'était plus maîtresse et qu'il valait mieux porter à /Jean/ qui en savait embrasser l'étendue." [1].

Equivocation on what had been the one consistent theme in the earlier works was a considerable weakness in this already flawed novel. The very nature of Philippe's conception of determinism appears to differ quite arbitrarily depending on the author's measure of sympathy for the character. For Raphaël, who represents the individual will Philippe has deliberately set out to vindicate, the element of fatality appears not to exist at all. Despite the superficial characterisation, enough detail is given the reader to suggest that Raphaël gets what he wants---in this case Marie---by acts of pure volition. "Tu es arrivé," declares his admiring friend, "avec ta vie, avec une façon de prendre dans tes mains la matière humaine et de la poser devant toi. Je ne sais pas si tu la pénètres toute, je ne sais pas si tu la comprends, mais je sais que tu la possèdes." [2]. For Jean himself the status of fatality is reduced to that of a psychological stumbling block which, given the proper education, he can overcome. While this sort of conditional determinism need not in itself be an unviable literary proposition, the perfunctory manner with which Philippe effects Jean's

1. Marie Donadieu, p.146.

2. Ibid., p.218.

transformation leaves the reader unconvinced. Marie alone appears inextricably bound to her destiny. That Philippe chose to introduce the element of heredity at this point only and emphasise that, regardless of the example of Raphaël and Jean, her condition was not negotiable, suggests that he here allowed a personal antipathy towards his model Marie-Louise to intervene and mar the thematic clarity of this novel.

Nowhere else in his work does Philippe's latent suspicion of women erupt into open hostility as it does in Donadieu. Berthe Méténier, although a weak character, was accorded a measure of sympathy totally denied Marie. The latter's treachery in duping her grandfather is compounded by lust and a refusal to make any effort, as Berthe had done, to earn a respectable living ("Elle n'aimait pas le travail et ne voyait en lui que la répétition d'un geste, que l'abdication de tous les autres gestes."). She herself gives voice to her fatal weakness. "La vie me fait peur maintenant", she admits to her mother. "Je suis une femme: quand je n'aime rien, je ne suis rien." [1]. Although it is tempting to explain the harsh treatment meted out to Marie entirely in terms of a personal animosity on the part of the author, it is clear that Philippe was here, as in other things, influenced by Nietzsche and, through him, Gide. An avid reader of one and close friend of the other, certain parallels in emphasis on this question of women are too close to ignore. All three writers, at certain points in their careers at least, viewed them as an obstacle to man's achievement of his full potential. The epigrammatic elegance of Also sprach Zarathustra (1883-1885)

1. Marie Donadieu, p.273.

probably best illustrates this strain in the German's thought:

> Der Mann ist im Grunde der Seele nur böse, das Weib aber ist schlecht [...]
> Das Glück des Mannes heisst: ich will. Das Glück des Weibes heisst: er will [...]
> Du gehst zu Frauen? Vergiss die Peitsche nicht! [1].

In Gide's Voyage d'Urien (1893) the hero's rejection of Ellis when he concludes that she is impeding his progress towards the ideal, is more direct: "Vous êtes un obstacle à ma confusion avec Dieu." [2]. Jean Bousset's tirade against the cloying dependence of women betrays a similar misogyny:

> ---Vous autres, femmes, depuis trop longtemps vous nous trompez. Un jour viendra où l'homme donnera moins d'importance à ce qui l'a trompé [...] Le mariage repose sur une erreur. La Femme ne peut pas vivre seule, alors elle l'absorbe pour mieux sentir qu'en aucun point de sa moelle elle n'est seule. [3].

His brutal dismissal of Marie when he discovers she is not essential to his well-being also continues in direct line from the example of Nietzsche and Gide:

> Si tu savais comme tout était simple! Tu étais exactement ma moelle et ma base et, me retrouvant debout, je sentais que je n'allais pas mourir [...] Ah! il y avait bien autre chose que toi, dans le monde. [4].

1. Friedrich Nietzsche, Also sprach Zarathustra, Goldmann Verlag, Munich, pp.52-53.

2. André Gide, Le Voyage d'Urien, Romans, Paris 1969, p.51. Compare Ménalque's hostility to the concept of wife and family ("Familles, je vous hais!") as fatal to a man's productive activity. Les Nourritures terrestres, Ibid., p.186. For the best analysis of Nietzsche's influence on Gide, see Renée Lang, André Gide et la pensée allemande, Paris 1949.

3. Marie Donadieu, p.311.

4. Ibid., p.290.

Marie Donadieu was Philippe's least satisfactory and certainly his least 'proletarian' novel, in the sense that his expressed sympathy for the poor and weak was at low ebb. The link between the characters themselves and the proletariat is tenuous. Jean's meagre livelihood is rarely mentioned and detail of material want or misery is entirely absent. Philippe preferred to rely on Jean's connection with Père Perdrix to maintain a token proletarian presence in Donadieu.

"Il me semble un peu osé de dire qu'il écrivait pour le peuple /.../ Car, d'une façon générale, la beauté supérieure qui rayonne de l'oeuvre du jeune écrivain n'est guère accessible au grand public." [1]. Undoubtedly right about the inability of the ordinary working man to appreciate Philippe's style, Guillaumin did not elaborate on what he considered this "higher beauty" in the writing. This novel more than any other was flawed, as even Rachilde had recognised, by Philippe's attempt to force onto its supposedly ordinary characters his own extra-ordinary sensitivity. This, as we have noted, resulted in the sacrifice of dramatic progression to a discursive style and the stilted and seemingly endless dialogue between the three central figures. This has nothing to do with Henri Ghéon's hypothesis about Philippe's gêne when trying to develop characters in an urban context. Philippe having abandoned here all serious pretence at descriptive realism, the result would have been identical had its nominal setting been the rural one of La Mère et l'enfant, Perdrix or Charles Blanchard. The psychological motivation of the hero is even less convincingly presented than it had been in Perdrix and the reader

1. Emile Guillaumin, "Un Artiste de la douleur et de la bonté: Charles-Louis Philippe", La Revue hebdomadaire, 30 September 1911, p.662.

has not that point of reference provided by the tangible setting and continuity of action of the earlier novel.

There is nothing to suggest the slightest inclination to self-parody in this humourless work. Unlike Bubu where the pretentious sentimentalism could occasionally be defended as a necessary element in the satire on types represented by such as Pierre and Louis, the nature of the style here remains constant. In a novel where much importance is attached to dialogue, the manner in which the characters converse does not change. Jean, before and after his 'conversion'---before and after, that is, he regains the author's affection--remains stilted and improbable. An absence of evolution in style between the romantic interlude with Marie and the later enthusiasm of Jean's loyalty to Raphaël precludes the possibility of conscious satire in the early part of the novel and points rather to a fundamental weakness throughout its construction.

By the end of Donadieu, Jean's education has been completed and he is restored to that position of dominance first lost in the opening chapters of Perdrix. The process, however, has not quite come full circle. He has traded a strength based on the material advantage gained by his early embourgeoisement for an apparent moral superiority. This is effected, however, largely at the expense of earlier achievements by the author in integrating thematic abstractions with concrete realism and in helping to bridge the gulf between the psychological and the naturalist novel.

Croquignole.

Croquignole was Philippe's last completed novel. Two extracts appeared in 1906 in L'Ermitage (15 May and 15 September) and the work was published en volume by Fasquelle in December of the same year. [1.]

"Quand il commença d'écrire Croquignole", wrote Marguerite Audoux, "sa timidité avait disparu tout-à-fait. Il parlait peu avec ceux qui lui étaient étrangers, mais avec ses amis il laissait déborder sa gaiété pleine de malice, et toutes les folies lui paraissaient bonnes." [2.] Certainly no reader familiar with the earlier novels can fail to detect in Croquignole a quickening of pace and a welcome emphasis on action after the laborious exposition in Le Père Perdrix and Marie Donadieu. In his short volume on Philippe [3.] Gide declared this exuberance a natural consequence of "une âme gourmande et impatiente de joie." The several manifestations of this sort of "impatience" here often appear, as we shall see, as singularly naïve wish-fulfilment on the author's part.

The action unfolds against the least promising of settings. Like Bubu, Croquignole explores the petites vies of the capital, but completely lacks the lurid impressionism Philippe had used to convey the atmosphere of evil and fatalism (as well as the banality) of the nighttime activity in the crowded boulevards of Paris. The novel opens with a protracted description of an

1. The only French republication was that by the Editions „Au Sans Pareil„, Paris 1923, from which all references to the novel in this thesis are taken. Croquignole appeared in one translation into Russian, in Leningrad (1936).

2. Marguerite Audoux, "Souvenirs", Nouvelle Revue Française, 15 February 1910, p.201.

3. Charles-Louis Philippe, Paris 1911.

anonymous office---presumably much like that in which the author himself worked between 1895-1909---peopled with miserably underpaid clerks. An impression of acute boredom and wasted human potential is immediately established ("Vous vous plongiez alors dans l'après-midi tout entière, vous vous asseyiez sur votre chaise, et soutenu, porté dans le grand Immobile, vous restiez là, avec une toute petite vie humaine et dont le temps se jouait") and it is against this that the character of the hero is developed. [1.]

None of Philippe's plots is complicated and that in Croquignole is simpler than most. The novel is composed of two sections of roughly equivalent length, and in the first two separate sets of characters are introduced and established in their precise social context. One group is a trio of friends---the hero Croquignole Buffières, Félicien Teyssèdre and Claude Buy---who are workers in the office. The other is a pair of women whom chance has placed in the same boarding house: Angèle, a sempstress, and Mme Fernand of no fixed occupation and even less certain morals. After successive examination of each of the characters, which claims most of the first part, the section ends with the bringing together of the two groups.

1. As early as January 1895, writing to Marcel Ray, Philippe had referred to "cet idéal nauséeux qu'est un bureau" (Nouvelle Revue Française, 15 February 1910, p.237) and from one of his early letters to Vandeputte, giving details of his employment in the Service de l'Eclairage, the antipathy towards his existence as a minor bureaucrat is obvious. "Chaque matin, j'entre là à dix heures moins un quart et j'en sors à cinq heures et demie avec environ deux heures d'intervalle pour déjeuner. Et comme vous le pensez, c'est bien atroce la bureaucratie! L'ennui ne consiste pas dans les paperasses qu'on remue mais dans la présence d'autres employés qui font du bruit, chantent, causent imbécilement de tout." (Letter of 12 December 1896, Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.11.)

The subsequent action is advanced primarily by Croquignole who quickly forms a liaison with Mme Fernand. The relationship benefits immeasurably from a windfall of 40,000 francs he inherits from an aunt, as he yields to the temptation to indulge every whim, both his own and those of his mistress. Against this backdrop of sensuality a parallel and contrasting relationship is developed between Claude and Angèle. The attraction here is entirely spiritual and seen very much in terms of a mutual assistance between workers. Claude's main achievement, through a series of discussions à la Donadieu and excursions into the countryside, is both to encourage the girl in her daily tasks and gradually to broaden interests hitherto confined to cutting and sewing. To interrupt this idyll and dispel the impression - rare in Philippe's works - that everyone is getting what he wants, conflict between Croquignole and Claude is introduced which precipitates a rapid and often melodramatic dénouement. Croquignole takes advantage of the proximity of the two women and, while waiting for Mme Fernand one afternoon, seduces her friend. When confronted with an account of this fait accompli Claude plunges into a depression punctuated by a series of bitter recriminations against Angèle. She attempts to see him to offer an explanation but, after his rejection of any further contact, finishes by committing suicide. The hero absents himself from Paris for two years in which time he manages to squander all but 98 francs of his fortune. After his return to the capital he is confronted with the necessity of resuming his former job and, having decided that life is not worth that price, he shoots himself.

Apart from brief publication notices in the Parisian journals, Croquignole attracted almost no contemporary criticism. Alone

among the major publications, La Revue bleue carried a review by Jean Nointel. [1] The reviewer offered no new critical insights, defining Philippe's talent in much the same way as Henri Ghéon had done in his appraisal of Marie Donadieu. Nointel, describing Philippe as a "naturaliste bienveillant", recognised that the foundation of his style was laid in the descriptive realism of the naturalists but modified by a certain lyricism---itself inspired by his sympathy for the people---in the mould of the symbolists. [2] Nointel's most serious reservation about the novel was also reminiscent of earlier criticism, especially that levelled at Marie Donadieu. He detected that perennial flaw which accompanied Philippe's tendency to create types: the undue sophistication of characters not sufficiently separated from the authorial voice. Commenting in particular on the discrepancy between Angèle's background as a reclusive sempstress and the cultivated eloquence she displays in her conversations with Claude, Nointel observed, "Charles-Louis Philippe est un poète lyrique qui se surveille; il lui arrive parfois de ne point surveiller ses personnages."

Paul Claudel, for reasons which he never fully elaborated, considered Croquignole Philippe's best novel. In a letter to Gide, whose own criticism of this and the other works was conspicuous by its absence, he hinted that it was the

1. See La Revue bleue, 9 March 1907, pp.314-317.

2. "Certes, il apparaît clairement que Charles-Louis Philippe continue les naturalistes; il leur emprunte leurs couleurs et jusqu'à leurs sujets; on ne saurait douter davantage qu'il ait hérité des symbolistes cette entente des plus secrets mouvements de la vie intérieure, ce sens du supra-sensible et du mystérieux qui fit si cruellement défaut aux naturalistes." (p.315.).

inspiration rather than the execution of the novel that attracted him. Referring to Gide's remark about Philippe's "âme gourmande et impatiente de joie", Claudel wrote: "Voilà le mot profond et définitif. C'est pourquoi [...] je serais disposé à regarder Croquignole comme le meilleur livre de notre ami, malgré la fin que je n'aime guère." [1] What is clear is that he had considered the novel full of promise for the author's subsequent career. Two years earlier he had written to Gide from Prague after receiving news of Philippe's death: "La mort n'est pas survenue pour lui avec la secrète complicité d'une vie et d'un talent substantiellement consommés, notre ami était en pleine croissance, et Croquignole annonçait les grandes oeuvres de la maturité." [2]

If Claudel's enthusiasm for the novel was somewhat tempered by what he considered the contrived suicides with which it ended, Henry Poulaille, one of the founders of the école prolétarienne (1932), considered Philippe's recourse to such convention to be the major flaw in the work. Admitting that he had admired it on first reading, he confessed that, "[...] Je l'ai relu il y a quelques ans et toutes sortes de petites choses artificielles me heurtèrent assez confusément ---mais dont je sens encore la gêne: c'est un roman plus travaillé que senti. Ceux qui possèdent bien Philippe me comprendront." [3] More recently, F.W.J. Hemmings, in his study of the Russian influence on the nineteenth century

1. Letter of 11 July 1911. Paul Claudel-André Gide, Correspondance:1899-1926, p.181.

2. Letter of 27 December 1909, Ibid., p.113.

3. Henry Poulaille, "Charles-Louis Philippe, le populisme et la littérture prolétarienne", Cahiers bleus, 29 March 1930, p.11.

French novel, conceded that Croquignole might have been a significant development in the evolution of Philippe's thought. In an otherwise lucid essay on the author's work, Hemmings appeared singularly unwilling to draw any definite conclusions about this novel. [1] The tentative statements he was prepared to make suggest that the novel represented a final victory for the influence of Dostoievsky after Philippe's flirtation with Nietzsche in Bubu and Marie Donadieu.

> It is clear that there is no far call from Philippe's 'strong' or 'rich' man to Nietzsche's superman [...] Without attempting to give a positive answer, we may observe at least that in his last completed novel, Croquignole, the 'superman' hero, having pursued his course reckless of the feelings of others, ends [...] in committing suicide. One might venture to conclude, then, that after a brief phase during which the balance tipped the other way, the influence of Dostoievsky prevailed and, taking it all in all, proved to be of more permanent validity than that of Nietzsche. (p.176.)

Both the interpretation of Hemmings and that of Nointel misrepresent the emphasis Philippe accords to the hero, the last in that series of Nietzschean 'strongmen' from Bubu to Raphaël. Nointel, in acknowledging the bond uniting the writer and the struggling lower classes, failed to explore the possibility that Philippe's real sympathies lay to a very great extent with the figure of the dominant and selfish Croquignole. Hemmings attached more appropriate weight to the role played by the hero but misinterpreted the significance of his suicide.

1. See "The Russian Novel and the Disintegration of Naturalism. (V) Charles-Louis Philippe", being Chapter X of Hemmings' The Russian Novel in France 1884-1914, pp.147-177.

There can be no doubt about the value Croquignole represents in Philippe's well established philosophical scheme. His actions--and especially his habit of taking what and whom he wants regardless of the consequences---immediately connect him with the 'hommes forts' of the earlier novels. Clipped and tending towards the aphoristic, his speech, too, betrays the purpose for which he was created.

> Mais, bon Dieu! moi, j'ai de la viande dans mon corps. Que voulez-vous que j'en fasse? Je ne peux pourtant pas l'employer à penser. [1].

As we have noted elsewhere in his work, Philippe occasionally appears to lose confidence in his own talent for characterisation, preferring to force home a particular point by direct, and unnecessary, intervention. The reader is, for example, informed quite frankly that, "[...] Tout droit, l'oeil ouvert, les quatre membres en place, Croquignole représentait une grande force humaine." [2]. He differs from his predecessors only by the absolute, if temporary, freedom granted him to indulge his physical desires. [3]. Although the arbitrary device of the 40,000 francs inheritance could well fall among those "petites choses artificielles" which disconcerted Poulaille, it introduced an element essential to the statement Philippe was trying to make. The elaboration of what some might construe as facile wish-fulfilment put in relief as none of the previous

1. Croquignole, Paris 1923, p.17.

2. Ibid., p.92.

3. See René Lalou, Histoire de la littérature française contemporaine de 1870 à nos jours, Paris 1947, Vol.II, p.643: "[Philippe] se dédouble: Bubu, Raphaël et Croquignole, trois images du barbare que Philippe ne pouvait être, ravissent brutalement les femmes que Pierre, Jean et Claude, plus proches tous trois du vrai Philippe, ne parviennent pas à retenir."

novels had done the author's hesitation before the two principal moral questions posed by his oeuvre: the responsibility of the individual to his community, and the ethics of labour. Never had Philippe presented so starkly the extremes of labour and leisure nor had one of his characters ever made so irrevocable a choice. It is significant that Croquignole with his newly acquired wealth was not permitted to cross the class boundary and enter the camp of the bourgeois. Moderation and security are concepts alien to his impulsive nature, and the possibility of saving or investing his funds never arises.

> On se demandait:
> ---Où s'arrêtera Croquignole?
> Il repondait:
> ---A la mort: [1].

The final drama of his suicide, then, remains a working class drama whose implications bear directly on the novel's central message.

The decision to take his own life does not represent, as Hemmings implied, a personal defeat for Croquignole and the demise of the Nietzschean principle. The opposite, rather, is true. Unlike the example of Perdrix where an element of chance robbed his death of all dignity, Croquignole's act is the triumphant expression of that volonté Philippe had for so long postulated with a considerable amount of bad conscience. Upon his return, penniless, to the capital Croquignole revisits his comrades at the office to renounce all belief in even that minimal value in labour to which he had once subscribed in order to earn a living. Having experienced the alternative way of life he can no longer consider, he tells his friends,

1. Croquignole, p.108.

that "gagner son pain quotidien" constitutes a viable proposition:

> ---Tu parles à ton aise. Bien sûr, si nous avions des rentes... Mais que veux-tu, mon ami, il faut bien vivre. /Croquignole/ s'écria: J'y ai beaucoup réfléchi. Eh bien, ça n'est pas sûr! [1].

Early in the novel Philippe prepared the way for Croquignole's spectacular rejection of the work ethic. In establishing the bleak atmosphere of the office, the reader, as much as each of the workers is addressed directly by the narrator:

> On appelle l'endroit où vous êtes un bureau! Il y eut une époque pendant laquelle vous pensiez au bien-être, aux jours calmes et où vous étiez heureux d'être assis et d'avoir le pain assuré. Vous vous réjouissiez d'avoir conquis ces choses. Ne sentez-vous pas maintenant combien vous gagniez péniblement votre pain quotidien? [2].

Croquignole's suicide is to be interpreted as a positive act, a refusal to resubmit to the mindless toil demanded by his office post to which death seems preferable. With reference to no other novel does Ferdinand Teulé's generalisation that "/Philippe/ loue le travail et dit son mépris à tous les parasites de la société" ring less true. [3]. In Croquignole

1. Croquignole, p.170.

2. Ibid., p.33. The above passage recalls a very similar outburst in "Le Journal de Roger Jan", one of the Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour (1897):

> Gardez ce plaisir pour d'autres, je n'irai pas dans vos bureaux. Planteurs de chiffres sur papier blanc, je vous hais. Allez empiffrer de bêtise, ô fonctionnaires! /.../ Je vous hais, je ne serai pas l'un des vôtres. (Quatre Histoires de pauvre amour, Gallimard, Paris 1961, p.109.).

3. See the foreword written by Teulé for Louis Lanoizelée's Charles-Louis Philippe: l'homme, l'ecrivain, p.13.

Philippe let loose that facet of an ambiguous character upon which he had previously always managed to impose some restraint. The reckless path that the hero is seen to cut through the weak and the poor to satisfy his ambitions suggests that Philippe's identification with the working class was not as absolute as many critics, and the author's own letters, suggest.

Certainly not every impediment to Croquignole's progress was removed. The figures of Félicien and Angèle offer a very different image of the worker, although their ultimate effectiveness as credible foils to the hero is undermined by the fact that Philippe used as models for the two characters his friends Lucien Jean and Marguerite Audoux. Félicien is described in an extremely indulgent manner and is seen in every respect as the opposite to Croquignole. Like Lucien Jean he is a conscientious family man and autodidact ("Le jeune ouvrier nourrissait sa mère, il était typographe et avait lu des livres") and possesses orthodox socialist beliefs in class solidarity and the intrinsic moral value of labour: "J'ai toujours cru qu'avoir à gagner leur pain quotidien sauverait les hommes [...] Je suis un homme parmi tous les hommes, je participe au grand labeur humain." [1] In his article "L'Oeuvre de Charles-Louis Philippe", Michel Arnauld confirmed that, "Félicien,---l'homme qui vous fait bien, rien qu'à vous regarder, l'homme 'en présence de qui chacun a effectué sa meilleure action'---Félicien, de son vrai nom Lucien Jean, fut vers ce

1. Croquignole, p.26. After Jean's death in 1908 the work of collecting his writings was begun by Philippe but interrupted by his own death the following year. The task was finished by Georges Valois, and a volume was published by the Mercure de France in 1910 under the title of Parmi les hommes.

temps-là pour Philippe un collègue de bureau, un compagnon de lettres, un ami respecté." [1].

This image of the perfect proletarian is disturbed, however, by the essential weakness of the character. In this respect he belongs among the ranks of Pierre Hardy, Louis Buisson and the early Jean Bousset. Félicien may be a very sympathetic worker, but he is far from being a virile one, and compares unfavourably with Croquignole. In contrast to the energy which drives the hero to satisfy his ambitions, Félicien's world rotates on an axis of self-imposed restraint:

> ---Moi, voyez-vous, lorsque je suis venu au monde, j'étais faible. Dès l'âge de dix-huit ans, j'ai dû choisir un principe. Je n'en fais pas mystère. Tenez, le voici: „Garde-toi de prendre à la vie plus que tu n'en peux contenir.„ [2].

This implied inferiority of Félicien is made explicit by his own admission of esteem for his opposite: "Jusqu'à vingt-cinq ans, ceci ne m'a pas gêné, parce que j'avais à me faire une

1. Nouvelle Revue Française, 15th February 1910, p.156. For further remarks on the connection between Lucien Jean and Félicien see the preface by George Haldas to Jean's Parmi les hommes, Editions Rencontre, Lausanne 1960, p.9, and Henri Bachelin, Charles-Louis Philippe, son oeuvre, p.24. For Philippe's own comment on Jean, who also worked at the Hôtel de Ville, see his letter of 23rd June 1899 to Vandeputte:

> J'ai un [...] ami ici, auprès de moi, qui travaille dans le bureau voisin, avec une âme bleue et un bon coeur humain [...] Quand tu viendras à Paris et que tu le verras, mon vieil Henri, tu sentiras combien il est beau, et lorsque tu connaîtras sa vie, auprès de sa femme et de ses enfants, tu en rapporteras le souvenir d'un spectacle divin [...] Et je vois mon pauvre ami boîteux, toujours malade, travailleur et bon, qui lit, qui médite, qui aime le bon peuple, celui qui gagne sa vie, avec de la peine. (Lettres de jeunesse à Henri Vandeputte, p.128).

2. Croquignole, p.26.

existence, monsieur Buffières, et c'est pourquoi j'ai voulu m'entretenir avec vous, ceci me gêne maintenant quand je vous regarde." [1].

Angèle is the other character who is portrayed in an extremely sympathetic manner, but the idealisation---almost the deification---of whom precludes any credible attack on the prevailing values embodied in Croquignole. She is presented, quite literally, as a working class saint.

> Elle apparaissait toute modeste, toute honnête et comme entourée par l'amour du travail. Parfois elle posait ses deux mains l'une sur l'autre, en croix, à la hauteur de ses seins, s'inclinait un peu vers la droite et battait des paupières, en silence. [2].

The stylised image used here seems close to a conventional representation of the Madonna of the Annunciation, and such reverence stands in marked contrast to the peremptory, if not callous, way in which the female figures were treated in the previous novels. This volte-face may be explained by the fact that Philippe was here undoubtedly using as his model the sempstress Marguerite Audoux who, in the last years of his life, had become one of the author's closest friends. [3]. Certain of Angèle's physical features---height, colour of eyes and set of hair---correspond to contemporary photographs

1. Croquignole, p.26.

2. Ibid., p.40.

3. See Emile Guillaumin, Mon Compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, pp.88-89. Audoux and Philippe's mother were the only people at his bedside in the Clinique Velpeau when the author died in December 1909. Guillaumin also records the curious resentment for Audoux which the writer's mother and sister subsequently developed. They were both convinced, for reasons that remain obscure, that it was Philippe and not Audoux who had written the latter's masterpiece, Marie-Claire. (Ibid., p.176).

and descriptions of Audoux, and details of Angèle's small attic flat which also serves as her workshop can be rediscovered in Audoux's autobiographical Atelier de Marie-Claire (1920). Until her acquaintance with Claude she appears passive to the extent that her saintly resignation to daily tasks borders on that unthinking acceptance characteristic of the bête humaine and already exhibited by Bubu's Berthe Méténier.

> Qui donc a dit que l'on travaille pour gagner son pain? Elle ne pensait même pas à cela. Le premier bruit du matin formait un appel auquel elle n'avait jamais appris à se soustraire. Un peu plus tard, il y avait le coup de midi pour un petit plat vite fait. Elle n'avait pas faim, mais midi aussi est un appel. Dès son premier jour, Angèle avait pris l'habitude de l'obéissance. [1]

Such Pavlovian reflexes, while inoffensive, hardly serve to commend Angèle to the reader who must remain indifferent to this uncomplicated character. Her platonic love affair with Claude followed by her surrender to Croquignole and the subsequent suicide are too quickly and thinly developed to make her more palatable. The discipline implied in her devotion to duty---and this observation applies equally to Félicien---is never seen, when compared to the exuberance of Croquignole, to be superior to the weakness in submitting to circumstance. If Philippe's personal attachment to Audoux produced an indulgent portrait in Angèle, it was also responsible for one of his least interesting characters.

This connection between model and character had, however, an even less fortunate effect on the style. As Philippe's rupture with Marie-Louise had led him to react with an

1. Croquignole, p.45.

excessively unsympathetic treatment of Donadieu, so, in the exactly opposite manner, his friendship with Audoux again permitted the autobiographical to undermine his literary credibility. As we have seen elsewhere, his tendency to sentimentalism needed little encouragement to surface, and here he indulged it with such enthusiasm that one must go right back to La Mère et l'enfant to find anything comparable. The following passage, with its naïve intimacy and facile play on words, is memorable only as a reminder that, as Claudel put it---rather charitably, in my view---Philippe's style never fully matured before his untimely death. It would be difficult to forgive even a schoolboy the lines which follow and which are all too typical of an atmosphere Philippe tries to construct around Angèle:

> On avait envie tout de suite de lui dire des mots doux. Il y avait dans la chambre un petit poêle bas, de ceux qu'on appelle des coeurs. Il y avait dans la chambre une petite femme charmante, de celles auxquelles on parle de leur coeur. [1].

It is Claude who is the real victim of Philippe's restatement of Nietzschean force in this final novel. Cast in the same mould as Pierre Hardy and Louis Buisson, he is totally resigned to his humble circumstances and, far from harbouring the slightest inclination to revolt, revels in subordinating himself to the work ethic. Whereas the harshness of daily reality was muted for Pierre and Louis by their Christian convictions, Claude willingly forces himself to ever greater effort, spurred on by his conception of a Dieu vengeur:

> „Tu gagneras ton pain à la sueur de ton front.„ Je crois fermement à la vérité de cette parole [...] Moi, je m'endors,

1. Croquignole, p.41.

> je me laisse vivre [...] Vous voyez, j'ai même le temps de parler philosophie [...] Dieu se réserve. Il aura le dernier mot, il n'endort pas les hommes sans avoir son but [...] Il y a longtemps que nous n'avons pas travaillé comme nous l'aurions dû. Vous allez voir qu'il va nous arriver quelque chose. [1]

An immediately apparent characteristic he shares with his two predecessors is his desire to bear the suffering of others. What might elsewhere appear laudable human charity appears here, under Philippe's pen, as unforgivable mollesse. In his necessity to suffer Claude takes the memory of Jean Morentin, a starving tramp in his native village, and creates around him an entire mythology of poverty. [2] He is obsessed with the figure of the old man who becomes for him the symbol of the starving poor. Whenever he suspects that he is enjoying himself too much Claude evokes this spectre to recall him to his self-appointed task of vicarious suffering. "Et Claude portait Jean Morentin et ne voulait pas le quitter, s'en sentant un peu responsable." [3]

The ultimate humiliation of Claude is executed in a manner which has become a leitmotiv in Philippe's novels. He loses Angèle to Croquignole, and it is perhaps significant that this 'transfer' is much more brutal than it had been in the case of Pierre Hardy or Jean Bousset. It involves nothing

1. Croquignole, p.35.

2. Morentin, like most of Philippe's characters, had his origins in one of the author's acquaintances. "Jean Morentin---ou Yoyo Morentin---[...] c'était un ouvrier agricole, un peu simple, un peu fruste, une sorte de „Charlot„ des campagnes, maladroit et naïf, qui ameutait le quartier par ses démêlés avec sa femme „la Marie de Jean„." (Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, p.36.)

3. Croquignole, p.75.

less than the deflowering of a virgin, her subsequent suicide and a blow to Claude's fragile self-confidence from which it seems improbable that he will, like Bousset, recover. The justice Philippe metes out is rough indeed and singularly lacking in that sympathy for his humble subjects which a critic like Nointel claimed was the characteristic distinguishing him from his naturalist predecessors.

As thematically Croquignole appears a re-working of the earlier novels, so does Philippe's style here present little that is new. Its foundations remain in his ability to extract the general from the particular, and the symbolic from the tangible. This technique was particularly vital to a novel like Croquignole where the banality of the subject matter exceeded that of any of the previous tableaux chosen by Philippe. It benefitted neither from the potentially picturesque moeurs campagnardes of Perdrix nor from the titillating details of proletarian morality glimpsed in Bubu. The office and its workers, especially, are made to yield up an infinity of boredom concealed beneath familiar sights and the routine of daily chores:

> Tantôt vous bâilliez, tantôt vous écriviez une ligne, tantôt vous balanciez votre tête, parfois un objet tombait, dans un bruit sec et sans ondes, qui ne mourait même pas. Il n'y avait plus à combattre: l'Eternité se prenait à vous! Vous ne saviez plus dans quel lieu vous étiez ni quelle était votre attitude. Sans amis, sans attaches, sans espoir, comme un monde emporté dans l'Ether, tournant autour de vous-même et peu convaincu de vivre, il semblait plutôt que vous étiez vécu par une bête énorme et qui vous portait. 1.

1. Croquignole, p.31.

As we have seen, much of Philippe's stylistic weakness can be attributed to his lack of measure. In the closing lines of the passage just quoted, to take but one instance, one may be forgiven for considering that, in trying to convey the disorientating effect of such heightened monotony, he lost control of his chosen images. Prolonging the effect he was trying to establish, he seems to slip naturally into that pretentious artificiality remarked on by even his more indulgent critics. On occasion the chosen symbol seems particularly inappropriate and produces bizarre results. One notable example of such misjudgment occurs when Philippe attempts to explain Croquignole's repressed sexuality by comparing it with a caged zebra at the zoo. While waiting in Angèle's room for Mme Fernand to return, his attentions turn to the girl instead. "C'est alors qu'on vit apparaître l'animal que Croquignole appelait le zèbre du Jardin des Plantes." [1] At the point where he abandons himself to his natural desires, the seduction of Angèle is expressed in a series of incongruous images:

> C'est alors que le zèbre sentit que ses quatre pieds allaient être inutiles et il lutta pour eux. Un élan. Zèbre par dessus le treillis, zèbre par dessus les barrières, zèbre en pleine course. [2]

Nearing the end of his brief career, Philippe was still insisting on that power of destiny over the individual which had become a rather too familiar theme in his work. In this final expression his efforts to convey the message appear less sophisticated than previously. He abandoned any earlier attempts to explain the hypothesis in terms of heredity or

1. Croquignole, p.131.

2. Ibid., p.133.

environment, and is content with simple exposition. The results achieved are mixed, the reader finding oppressive the overt references to "destinée", "fatalité" and "providence". One of the more successful passages, however, which establishes the atmosphere for the first chance meeting between Angèle and Mme Fernand is curiously reminiscent of Eliot's evocation of the "yellow fog" in Prufrock, "that rubs its back upon the windowpanes,/The yellow smoke that rubs its muzzle on the windowpanes ...":

> Ensuite la Destinée ne se repose pas. Il semble que ce soit la Destinée qui vienne vous voir. On dirait qu'elle veut faire le tour de la maison, et, touchant à tout pour ne rien oublier, suivant les murs, [...] sans bruit et connaissant les routes, elle arrive à votre porte, y trouve la clé, la tourne et veut savoir si elle peut aussi passer par là. Vous vous laissez faire. [1.]

If in such a passage Philippe manages to suggest the power of a stealthy and sinister fatality, elsewhere it re-emerges in less appropriate contexts. The result, far from reinforcing a prevailing climate of doom, succeeds only in trivialising the concept. Even the most innocuous settings are not immune from blatant intrusion. The first concern of Croquignole, having invited his friends to an afternoon in the country to celebrate his inheritance, is to provide food and drink. "Boire!...Boire! dit Croquignole. A boire! Et par une bénédiction spéciale, par une de ces rencontres qui vous portent à croire que, vraiment, la Destinée vous veut du bien, la première maison était une auberge." [2.] Not only does the overuse of this expository method weaken the novel,

1. Croquignole, p.48.

2. Ibid., p.64.

it is also quite unnecessary. Philippe had at his disposal other devices, like that which had been exploited to develop a hereditary trait in Marie Donadieu, to achieve an identical effect. One considerably subtler technique was used competently in Croquignole. As we have mentioned above, the novel's first section was devoted to the introduction and development of the central characters. Visibly dividing them into two camps and holding them separate for most of this initial section, Philippe passed from figure to figure, providing the most sustained series of character analysis in all his novels. Throughout the process, as the narrative gaze passes between the two groups the reader, increasingly aware of the division, is led to anticipate their ultimate confrontation. When the meeting in the Boulevard Saint-Michel finally does take place, its inevitability has been firmly but unobtrusively established and the atmosphere set for the drama of the second section.

Charles Blanchard.

When he began work on it in 1906, Philippe had intended Charles Blanchard to be an account of the life of his father. That it remained unfinished on the author's death three years later was not because his interest in the undertaking had diminished but was rather the result of the most crippling attack of that "incertitude" which we have noticed throughout his work. Having once decided on his subject matter Philippe was incapable, on his own admission, of choosing between two opposite directions the narrative could take. A glance at the integral edition of the several chapters and variants left by the author will reveal the extent of the fragmentation of his basic plan.

This edition, published by Gallimard on 4th June 1913, is divided into two sections. [1.] The first contains the initial two chapters of Blanchard which Philippe, although frustrated by his inability to develop a sustained narrative line, had managed to prepare for publication shortly before he died. The two chapters, "Le Froid" and "La Maison du sabotier" were published in the Nouvelle Revue Française (1st January and 1st February 1910) immediately after his death. Because Philippe had corrected the final proofs, these two chapters are generally referred to as the first, or original, version of Blanchard. [2.]

1. All references to the text are taken from this edition. Gaston Gallimard had approached Léon-Paul Fargue for his collaboration, and a preface by the poet introduces the work. Fargue wrote to Valery Larbaud at the end of April 1913 mentioning Gallimard's proposal and to say that Larbaud would be sent a copy of the preface which had already been completed. (See Léon-Paul Fargue - Valery Larbaud, Correspondance:1910-1946, p.148.).

2. These two chapters also appear as Charles Blanchard in Les Cahiers nivernais et du Centre (Nevers,

The second section contains a supplement to this first version---"Solange Blanchard envoie Charles Blanchard quêter aux enterrements"[1]---followed by a second sketch of substantial length entitled "Le Pain".[2] This section included yet a third "version" which is merely the series of five further fragments collected by André Gide and published in the Nouvelle Revue Française, Gide's ordering of the fragments being retained; "Charles Blanchard heureux", "La Petite Ville", "Le Marche", "La Foire", and "Les Chevaux de bois".[3] Variations of the original version follow with "Le Froid" being replaced by "Paroles de Solange à Charles Blanchard", and "La Maison du sabotier" by "Autre début" and "La Maison du sabotier" I, II & III.[4] The Gallimard edition ends with four variations of Gide's third 'version'; "Les Chevaux de bois" I, II, III & IV.[5]

February-March 1910) and in an edition of La Mère et l'enfant published by Mame (Tours, 1959).

1. This supplement first appeared in the Nouvelle Revue Française in April 1913.

2. Published in La Grande Revue, 25th June 1910, pp.673-690.

3. "Les Charles Blanchard" (with an introduction by André Gide) Nouvelle Revue Française, 15th February 1910, pp.260-288. See also the entry in Gide's Journal for 1st February 1910. "Avant-hier longue étude des manuscrits laissés par Philippe---ou du moins, plus spécialement de Charles Blanchard, dont je découvre une demi-douzaine de versions presque également bonnes, et s'excluant. Cependant Francis Jammes continuera à croire que Philippe était bon parce qu'il „se laissait aller à l'inspiration„. Rien ne m'a plus instruit sur l'art d'écrire que ces feuillets abandonnés---dont je tâcherai de publier une grande partie [...] (p.288). He was assisted by Francis Jourdain in this task of collating the various manuscript sketches. See Jourdain's Sans remords ni rancune, p.191.

4. These last three had previously been published in Les Cahiers nivernais et du Centre, Nevers, February-March 1910.

5. One translation of these fragments, into German, was made by Wilhelm Südel and Friedrich Burschell

Although there can be no justification for treating any of the three versions as a completed whole, a brief examination of these attempts to create a viable novel illuminates several problems endemic to Philippe's work. Here we have the most striking example of that ambiguity of thought discernible over the entire range of his novels and which here ultimately defeats the author. Several thematic extremes---poverty and contentment, slavery and rewarding labour---are each developed in an isolation not to be found in the earlier writing. It appears that Philippe, at the end of his brief career was no closer to a synthesis of those disparate elements than he had been at the time of writing Bubu.

The central character is the young Charles Blanchard who, over the three versions, ranges in age from seven to about fifteen years. A general distinction may be drawn between the first two versions and the series of fragments published by Gide. Both of the first two concentrate on the extreme poverty of the boy and his widowed mother. The original version, especially, presents a bleak portrait of a household where avoiding starvation and hypothermia are the principal occupations. An element of tentative hope is, however, introduced at the end of "La Maison du sabotier". Charles is sent to live in a neighbouring village with an uncle who is a clog maker and he experiences there the various benefits of steady labour. As the title of the second version suggests, "Le Pain" contains an attempt to raise to the level of symbol the poverty whose physical realities had earlier been exposed. Philippe's concern here is to convey the mythical importance bread assumes in the lives of the destitute for whom it is the only bulwark against extinction. Both versions are united in tone by an insistence

and published by Insel-Verlag, Leipzig, 1922.

on the power of fatality which appears exaggerated even to readers already familiar with Philippe's treatment of this favourite theme. Gide's fragments show Philippe contemplating a much less sombre development of the boy. In the first two, the atmosphere is entirely lighthearted as the narrative concentrates on the innocent experience of a child exploring his village and the surrounding countryside. When Philippe does take up again the theme of poverty it is explored in a comparatively muted fashion. In "Le Marché" it is the collective sight of fruit and vegetables, which he is accustomed to see growing wild, heaped in piles that first suggests to Charles that he has never eaten his fill of anything ("Il lui sembla bien vite qu'il appréciait et qu'il jugeait les choses avec un organe plus puissant encore que ses yeux: avec son estomac!"). In "Les Chevaux de bois" his poverty is conveyed not by the skeletal spectre of the boy in "Le Froid", but rather quite simply by his inability to afford the one sou price of admission to the roundabout at the village fair. The several variations listed above to the three versions are re-workings of the original sketches, although some add significantly to the overall pattern of Blanchard. Our attention will be restricted to these when, at a later point, we examine the thematic implications of the work.

Critical reaction to Blanchard was generally indulgent, most commentators being prepared to see in it promise for a literary career cut tragically short by Philippe's untimely death. Claudel, for example, writing to Gide the day after the second instalment of the 1910 N.R.F. edition appeared, remarked that, "Il y a dans le Charles Blanchard, surtout dans la seconde

partie, des choses de la plus haute beauté et touchant au sublime." [1]. In his Mémoires improvisés, however, Claudel's recollections appear rather too sympathetic, assigning a particular artistic merit to Philippe's inability to decide on a final format for his book:

> C'était un pauvre être, très touchant, très pathétique, qui ne manquait pas de talent, loin de là. Son dernier livre, Charles Blanchard, est assez intéressant parce que c'est une technique assez particulière du roman: il commence un roman, il montre les quatre ou cinq manières par lesquelles ça pourrait commencer, et ça ne finit pas. C'est assez curieux. [2].

Léon-Paul Fargue, in his preface to the 1913 Gallimard edition, placed a similar construction on the fragmentation of the work: "Les chapitres que nous publions de Charles Blanchard ne sont [...] pas des „études„ qu'il faisait pour un tableau, mais ce tableau même [...] Il nous fallait donc [publier les variantes] telles quelles, l'une sur l'autre et dans leurs états successifs, comme on superpose les portraits d'une même famille pour en obtenir une sorte de type." (p.28). [3].

1. Letter dated 2nd February 1910. Paul Claudel-André Gide, Correspondance 1899-1926, p.119.

2. Paul Claudel, Mémoires improvisés, Paris 1954, p.172.

3. See the letter to Fargue (30th April 1917) which Paul Valéry wrote after having read the preface. Clearly it was Fargue's work that attracted him and there is no indication that Valéry ever took more than this passing interest in Philippe: "[...] J'ai trouvé, le soir, une petite heure pour lire votre préface à Charles Blanchard [...] Elle est rudement bien, cette étude, d'une précision extra-ordinaire---avec (il me semble, car je suis très peu familier avec l'oeuvre de Ch.L.Ph.) avec un degré singulier d'adaptation au sujet [...] Il faudra que je lise tout le volume pour me rendre compte." (Paul Valéry, Lettres à quelques-uns, Paris 1952, p.119.)

The most unfortunate aspect of a tendency to indulge Philippe's posthumous work was a claim, made by Henry Poulaille, that it was exempt from conventional modes of literary criticism. Improvising on a line of reasoning already established by Charles Albert and Marcel Martinet [1], the essence of Poulaille's tenuous argument was that either one intuitively felt the beauty of Philippe's prose or one did not. The following remarks on Charles Blanchard were provoked by René Lalou's observation that even this last work maintained traces of the excessive sentimentality which marked the early novels: "Evidemment il ne faut pas demander aux critiques professionnels de comprendre la beauté qu'il y a dans telle simple phrase, comme 'le pain lui-même faisait la guerre au pain.' Ainsi M.René Lalou ne voit là qu'une mièvrerie; sans doute n'a-t-il pas davantage saisi le sens étrangement pénétrant de cet aveu de Félicien, l'ami de Croquignole...'Garde-toi de prendre à la Vie plus que tu n'en peux contenir.'" [2].

Not surprisingly, the aspect of Blanchard which preoccupied many critics was its thematic ambivalence. Henri Bachelin noted that on the whole, "[Philippe] n'a pas su choisir entre la conception de la vie dure et celle de la vie douce", adding with specific reference to the first version that, "A la vérité,

1. Supra, p. 140, n.2.

2. Henry Poulaille, Nouvel Age littéraire, Paris 1930, p.228. The line in question from Blanchard is an allusion to the irony in the peasant's struggle to ensure that he has enough bread to live, a process which serves only to prolong his suffering. Lalou's observation had been that, "[...] Même la ferme prose de Charles Blanchard accepte des mignardises: „Le pain qu'il avait mangé l'avait fait grandir. Le pain lui-même faisait la guerre au pain!„" (René Lalou, Histoire de la littérature française contemporaine de 1870 à nos jours, vol.II, p.642.

le texte qu'il avait livré pour l'impression peu de temps avant de mourir, prouve qu'il avait opté pour la version de la vie dure, qui avait été celle de son père encore enfant." [1]. Jacques de Fourchambault preferred to see the "incertitude" in terms of the opposing claims of the particular, in those specific details of his father's life that Philippe had wanted to record, and of a symbolic representation of the existence of an entire social stratum. "Il est pris entre le réalisme et le spiritualisme, entre l'histoire objective de Charles Blanchard et la généralisation de son cas dans une allégorie de la misère." [2]. Henri Clouard, on the other hand, detected a desire to present two different conceptions of childhood; one emphasising the destruction of a child's natural spontaneity by prolonged physical hardship, and the other conveying the innocent sense of wonder a child brings to his observation of his surroundings. [3].

Superimposing, as Fargue suggested, the various tableaux of the boy and his mother undoubtedly produces an overall effect. It is, however, interesting only as an insight into the psychology of the author hesitating before the options open to him. Blanchard is a juxtaposition of vignettes which Philippe himself did not consider an organic whole and was

1. Henri Bachelin, Charles-Louis Philippe, son oeuvre, Paris 1929, p.44.

2. Jacques de Fourchambault, Charles-Louis Philippe, le bon sujet, Paris 1943, p.189.

3. See Henri Clouard, Histoire de la littérature française de 1885 à 1914, Paris 1947, p.517.

not, as Michel Ragon claimed, "le roman du pauvre, le roman du pain [...] une sorte de synthèse mythique de la pauvreté." [1] Neither was it a conscious attempt to create a multi-faceted hero by approaching him from various angles. Nothing in Philippe's correspondence or the accounts given by the circle of friends he frequented during the writing of Blanchard suggests that any such stylistic innovation was ever intended. While Claudel, posted at the French embassy in Prague at the time, was no longer in regular contact with Philippe, Gide had developed ever closer contact as the writer's career developed. In his introduction to the N.R.F. fragments, he maintained that it was frustration and not technique which had produced the successive portraits of Charles and his mother. "Et plutôt que d'en élire un, également amoureux de chacun, également mécontent de chacun, Philippe enfin renonçait à ce livre." [2]

Philippe had never shown any doubt about the purpose of his projected novel. It was intended as a personal tribute to his father and a lifetime of devotion to daily labour. Based on his father's recollections of his childhood---on which Philippe also drew to write his stories for Matin[3].--- Blanchard had been started when the father was still alive, and the old man's subsequent demise merely provided a stimulus to the project. A fortnight afterwards, Philippe wrote to

1. Michel Ragon, Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne en France, Paris 1974, p.152.

2. Nouvelle Revue Française, 15th February 1910, p.261.

3. His collaboration with Matin began in 1908 and during the final year of his life he was contributing weekly his contes and nouvelles.

Max Elskamp to announce the death.

> "Je vais me remettre au travail. J'écrivais un livre dont j'avais puisé le sujet dans les récits que /mon père/ m'avait faits de sa vie. Je vais le suivre pas à pas, je vais m'efforcer à comprendre ce qu'il était. C'est maintenant surtout que je vais être son fils." [1].

A month later his mother received a similar letter in which Philippe gave a more precise indication of the nature of the work.

> Tu me dis, ma chère maman, que mon père ne voulait pas que je fasse un livre sur lui. Ce livre je l'avais déjà commencé avant sa mort /.../ Je tire de sa vie le bel exemple qu'il m'a donné, mon père ne pouvait pas m'empêcher de penser qu'il avait toujours accompli son devoir /.../ Il aurait compris que j'avais écrit ce livre parce que je l'aimais de tout mon coeur. Je voudrais que ce livre soit un beau livre et qu'il apprenne à ceux qui le liront qu'un homme loyal et courageux qui était mon père a vécu une vie de travail. [2].

These letters are identical in tone to those written to his mother concerning the inspiration for La Mère et l'enfant. In declaring that he was writing a book about his father "parce que je l'aimais de tout mon coeur" Philippe was admitting, of course, the worst possible reason for undertaking a work of fiction. Reading this correspondence one would be justified in fearing for Blanchard the same excessive sentitimentality that marred Philippe's first novel. That such weakness is only rarely discernible here suggests that the conflict between fermeté and bonté with which the intervening

1. Letter of 16th April 1907. Nouvelle Revue Française, 15th February 1910, p.254.

2. Charles-Louis Philippe, Lettres à sa mere, Paris 1928, p.45. See the letter of 26th May 1907: "Je travaille beaucoup à mon livre. Il avance tout doucement. J'espère en être à la moitié pour les vacances. Tu verras, maman, je fais tout mon possible pour que ceux qui le liront puissent aimer mon père comme je l'aimais." (Ibid., p.49).

works had been concerned was in the end---as Croquignole led led us to believe---won by Nietzsche.

The "incertitude" which prevented the completion of Blanchard was not, then, the familiar one which marked the other works from Bubu to Croquignole. Philippe's problem here was less a philosophical than a more formally literary one, as he remained undecided about whether to convey a realistic portrait of rural poverty or attempt a more general and symbolic one. The author's difficulty was aggravated by a basic confusion in the lines of documentation he was willing to take up. On the one hand, there was his expressed intention to write the biography of his father based on the latter's own account. The elder Philippe's childhood had been extremely difficult, his parents having been illiterate journaliers reduced to begging whenever casual jobs in the fields could not be found. From this source we owe the first two versions of Blanchard with their emphasis on physical deprivation. Certainly the fragment "Solange Blanchard envoie Charles Blanchard quêter aux enterrements" derives from this source. Here the young boy finds himself on the same level as the criminals, madmen, sick and the dying who hover around graves-sides to collect alms from mourners. It was such examples of unrelieved pessimism that were partly responsible for the myth about Philippe's own poverty which circulated after the author's death. If his parents and grandparents had on occasion been reduced to begging, it is certain that Philippe himself had never experienced such humiliation. "Ne confondons pas", wrote Henri Bachelin, "les premières années de Charles Blanchard, qui fut son père, et les siennes propres." [1].

1. Henri Bachelin, Charles-Louis Philippe, son oeuvre, Paris 1929, p.7.

Philippe as well as his father, however, had been raised in Cérilly and inevitably he relied on his own recollection to provide many details of the setting in Blanchard. It was precisely here that his intention to render a faithful biography of his father met opposition from a more subjective ambition. With his memories of people and places in and around Cérilly entered Philippe's own impressions of childhood into the plan of the novel he was attempting to write. He was enough of a romantic to resist altering the substance of his own vision of boyhood---one which incorporated a good measure of optimism ---preferring to develop it separately in the series of sketches eventually published by Gide. How different is this other figure in "Charles Blanchard heureux" and "La Petite Ville" exploring his surroundings, from the shivering skeleton of "Le Froid".

> Des heures toutes bleues avaient envahi la rue et enveloppaient les maisons; le promeneur était au milieu d'elles, et comme celui qui mène une vie pour laquelle il semble qu'il soit né, le fond de son coeur était joyeux et sans inquiétude [...] Où est-elle, la créature déshéritée qui se souvient d'avoir pleuré? Des jours transparents joignaient la Terre au Ciel, on s'approchait sans cesse d'un bonheur profond dans lequel, entrant tout entier, chacun allait jouir de la vie éternelle. [1.]

Fidelity to personal experience provided a base from which Philippe pursued a lyrical treatment of Charles - of which the above passage is typical - in the final fragments. [2.]

Despite the fragmentation of Blanchard there remain several themes of which Philippe did not lose sight and

1. "La Petite Ville", Charles Blanchard, pp.156-158.

2. Lalou detected in Philippe's work a perennial optimism which he interpreted as the influence of the novelist's three favourite writers; Dostoievsky, Nietzsche and Claudel. "Car s'il évoquait la pauvreté et la souffrance, il ne cessait point de chercher la certitude et la

which recur in all three 'versions'. His tendency to see fatality at work in human activity plays a predictably important role. In the original two chapters Solange and her son huddle in their cabin and wait for the winter cold to take hold of them. "Pendant ces après-midi si longues au cours desquelles sa mère recevait ce destin des veuves et lui ce destin des enfants sans père, il gardait sur sa chaise une immobilité tranquille." [1] Even the "Charles Blanchard heureux" figure is not spared. The determinism at work here, however, is of a much subtler variety, presented not in the external guise of the seasons but rather as a psychological condition instilled in the boy over a period of years. Gradually, through a series of seemingly trivial incidents Philippe is careful to elaborate, Charles comes quite unconsciously to accept his inferior place on the social ladder. The culmination of the process is unspectacular and occurs at a village fair as he instinctively stands back to make way for the boys of middle class families queuing for a ride on the chevaux de bois which he cannot afford.

> Charles Blanchard ne lutta pas. A aucun moment ne vînt à son esprit qu'il eût pu combattre [...] Il ne s'agissait pas de s'en désoler; il ne s'agissait pas de souhaiter qu'il en fût autrement; c'était ainsi [...] Il occupait la dernière place avec naturel." [2]

Philippe chose the symbol of "le pain" around which to construct one of his sketches for the novel. Although the

joie qu'elle apporte." (René Lalou, Histoire de la littérature française contemporaine de 1870 à nos jours, p.641.

1. Charles Blanchard, p.71.
2. Ibid., p.172.

importance attached by the poor to their daily bread was accorded due importance in La Mère et l'enfant, Perdrix and Croquignole, in Blanchard its significance becomes almost mystical as it subordinates to itself all the other concerns of the destitute. In "Le Pain" Philippe devoted long passages to description of how Solange prepared the coarse dark bread that sustained herself and her son. Even the changes in its texture over the week are noted, as it deteriorated from a black spongy mass to become first dry and granular and finally as hard and brittle as cinders. [1] Using this as an introduction Philippe formulates a convincing account of the psychological effect such absolute dependence has on the individual. Solange's preoccupation with economy approaches paranoia in her anticipation of the various ways her weekly stock of bread could be threatened.

> Mais la lutte ne devait pas se passer entre le pain, les souris, les chats et ce désordre qu'apporte dans les ménages un enfant. Il est d'autres ennemis pour le pain des pauvres, tout est un ennemi pour le pain des pauvres /.../ Les jours de bonne santé, Solange Blanchard avait un peu plus d'appétit et mangeait un peu trop de ce pain qu'elle avait eu tant de mal à gagner. Les jours de maladie elle en mangeait un peu moins que d'ordinaire, mais elle craignait que la maladie n'en vînt à l'empêcher d'aller gagner son pain. La joie comme la douleur était à craindre. [2]

A theme only tentatively treated in the earlier novels ---the question of an intrinsic value to labour---assumed a dominant role in Philippe's conception of Blanchard. Although nowhere does he reintroduce a character like Bubu or

1. See Charles Blanchard, pp.125-130.
2. Ibid., p.130.

Croquignole who entirely rejected the work ethic, in the earliest version are to be found echoes of their suspicion that labour is an incursion on the liberty of the individual. Although in "La Maison du sabotier" it is clear that moving Charles from the dark misery of his mother's cabin to the warmth of his uncle Baptiste's shop can only benefit the boy, his apprenticeship to the sabotier is contemplated in a less than enthusiastic manner. It is primarily in the presentation of the figure of the uncle that Philippe suggests the abrutissement of the individual through manual labour:

> Il fallait être [...] d'une conscience enragée pour pousser les sabots jusqu'à terme [...] Dans un élan continuel, emporté par une sorte de fureur guerrière, on eût dit que Baptiste se jetait, son outil dans une main, sur le quartier de bois qu'il maintenait de l'autre, et que, lui portant des coups droits, cette fois-ci enfin, il tenait sa vengeance [...] On attendait avec anxiété l'instant où, fou d'impuissance, il allait tout quitter, et tournant sa rage vers l'humanité tout entière, se précipiter dans la rue et sauter à la gorge des passants comme s'ils eussent été cause de son malheur. [1].

One has only to consider the variations on this particular chapter to see to what extent the opposite vision of a physically and spiritually rewarding labour attracted Philippe. The following two extracts, from "La Maison de sabotier" II and III respectively, are sufficient to illustrate the point:

> En voyant la boutique on enviait la vie d'un ouvrier appliqué qui, tout le long du jour, goûte ce plaisir qui consiste à manier des instruments dont il est seul à connaître l'usage et qui fait de lui, parmi les autres hommes, un homme actif et intelligent. [2].

1. Charles Blanchard, p.82.

2. Ibid., p.195.

> Il allait d'un outil à l'outil voisin, comme l'on va d'un ami à un autre [...] Il finissait, du reste, par recevoir sa récompense. Le résultat d'un effort bien dirigé, le couronnement de mille soins délicats, la récompense accordée à une conscience scrupuleuse était que deux sabots parfaits, faisant la paire, entre ses main venaient d'être achevés. 1.

Even in the original version, despite the unflattering picture of the métier, Charles' ultimate offer---"Mon oncle, voulez-vous que j'essaye de fendre votre bois?"---is seen as the climax, and inaugurates a new and more hopeful life for the boy. Although in the final fragments a certain ambiguity does remain, Philippe, undoubtedly spurred on by the memory of his father, does seem to weigh the balance in favour of labour and, by implication, against the previously triumphant figures of Bubu and Croquignole.

1. Charles Blanchard, p.202. In commenting on Philippe's intentions for the novel, it is clear that Guillaumin was considering only the two initial chapters and their variants. "[...] Il voulait montrer par l'exemple de son père la lente initiation de l'enfant à la loi du travail; comment l'homme plus tard se trouve ennobli par le salutaire effort quotidien, par les simples devoirs de la vie; comment il vieillit dans une sorte de majesté olympienne qui découle naturellement de son humble carrière bien remplie." (Emile Guillaumin, "Un Artiste de la douleur et de la bonté: Charles-Louis Philippe", La Revue hebdomadaire, 30th September 1911, p.663.)

Emile Guillaumin: Biographical Summary.

Like Philippe a product of the Bourbonnais, Emile Guillaumin was born at Neverdière, a métairie rented by his maternal grandparents near Ygrande, on 10th November 1873. Having spent his boyhood there he moved with his parents to the small family landholding of Les Vignes in the village where he helped to farm their few acres. In 1907, with the royalties from his first novel La Vie d'un simple (1904), he established himself on a plot of land barely two hundred metres away and, apart from excursions into the surrounding départements and to Paris, a period of national service (1894-97) at Aurillac and mobilisation during the First War, he remained a farmer there until his death in 1951. His formal education was restricted to a period of five years (1881-86) at the village school and although encouraged by his family to continue---a rare phenomenon in a peasant family with a single son---he was determined to stay on the land.

It was a decision he seriously questioned only twice over his long career. From correspondence with the publisher Stock just after he had finished La Vie d'un simple, it is clear that at that point he harboured an ambition to become a professional writer. His anxiety at Stock's hesitation to publish the book prompted a pleading note on 21st June 1903. "[...] J'ai tellement l'impatience d'être fixé que je me permets de vous écrire pour vous prier de ne pas m'oublier. C'est que votre décision m'ouvrira un horizon vers les lettres

ou me rejettera vers la glèbe pour jamais!" [1]. The second occasion arose after the publication of Guillaumin's fourth novel, Rose et sa Parisienne (1907). He was offended by the hostile reaction of the Ygrande villagers who thought they recognised themselves in some of its less sympathetic characters. In a letter (February 1908) to Daniel Halévy, Guillaumin complained that "[...] les criailleries des gens ---dont quelques-unes me parvenaient---m'ont beaucoup affecté [...] J'ai même été tout à fait déprimé pendant quelques jours." [2]. In fact he appears to have been more upset than the letter to Halévy suggests, and he considered leaving the farm at Ygrande to become editor of a daily newspaper, L'Union républicaine, founded by a certain senator Peyronnet. "On m'aurait donné d'assez bons mois. Mais en fin de compte, j'ai cru devoir malgré tout décliner l'offre." [3].

It was through Georges Bodard, a local butcher and bibliophile living in Cérilly, that Guillaumin was introduced to Charles-Louis Philippe. Having read and admired Guillaumin's Dialogues bourbonnais (1899), Philippe had asked to meet the

1. P.-V. Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, Paris 1936, p.212. See his letter of 17th October of the same year. "Si donc vous me repoussez tout à fait, il est probable que je renoncerai à toute tentative nouvelle; ce sera pour moi le coup de massue qui me jettera vers la glèbe pour jamais." (Ibid., p.216). Stock did publish the novel the following year and Guillaumin, far from abandoning his livelihood, used the proceeds from La Vie to set up his own farm.

2. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin; 1894-1951, p.74.

3. Letter of 22nd December 1912 to Raphaël Périé. Roger Mathé (ed.) Ibid., p.130. See also his letter (28th April 1912) to Valery Larbaud (Ibid., p.121).

author, and their first meeting took place on 18th September 1901 at the home of Philippe's parents, although it was not until two years later that they began to communicate regularly: [1].

> C'est de ce printemps 1903 que date la vraie cordialité des rapports entre Philippe et moi. Certes, l'artiste m'en imposait un peu, créateur d'un genre si personnel, si nouveau, où le lyrisme s'associait à tant d'émouvante vérité. Mais l'homme, de plus près connu, restait un camarade du pays, de même plan social ---et cela contribuait beaucoup au rapprochement, à l'amitié. [2].

Throughout his career Guillaumin was concerned with the social welfare of the peasantry, and his work both as a novelist and journalist must be studied in the light of his commitment. During the first decade of the century he was a pioneer of syndicalism among the rural labourers of the Bourbonnais. Although prepared to take a much more active role than had Philippe in the social advancement of the workers, he was no revolutionary, and in 1901 had written to Jean Grave, editor of Les Temps Nouveaux, to dissociate himself from the anarchist's views: "Je ne partage pas toutes vos théories; je suis un paisible que la violence effraie." Somewhat enigmatically he added, however, that

1. See Georges Bodard, "Charles-Louis Philippe: Souvenirs et impressions", Cahiers du Centre, Nevers, April 1935, p.16. Robert Mallet, in his edition of the Claudel-Gide correspondence, is mistaken in his assertion that Philippe and Guillaumin had known each other from childhood. (See Paul Claudel-André Gide, Correspondance: 1899-1926, Paris 1949, p.294).

2. Emile Guillaumin, Mon Compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, p.99. See also Guillaumin's article, "Un Artiste de la douleur et de la bonté: Charles-Louis Philippe", La Revue hebdomadaire, 30 September 1911, p.664: "Nous nous voyions chaque année, aux vacances, une distance de trois lieues seulement séparant nos demeures. Plus d'une fois il fit à pied ce petit voyage, car il n'était plus du tout maladif ainsi que certains l'ont affirmé."

"Je suis peut-être néanmoins anarchiste, un peu inconsciemment."[1]

A latent anarchism did surface periodically in his correspondence, although with greatest frequency during the years immediately preceding his first novels. While garrisoned at Aurillac he wrote a letter to his parents in which his cynical appraisal of the Bazar de la Charité disaster came close to approval of the carnage. He claimed that mining catastrophies moved him much more, since the miners left behind starving wives and children when they died, "[...] tandis que ces nobles dames étaient à leurs plaisirs après tout. (Car ces ventes de charité ne sont qu'un prétexte à exiber leur toilette, ou à papoter avec de gentils cavaliers)."[2] Such callousness seems largely the product of youthful indignation at the existence of widespread social inequality, and disappeared as his thought matured and he turned his attention to the more immediate problems of the local peasantry. What the above letter does suggest, however, is Guillaumin's well defined conception of social hierarchy. Much stricter than Philippe's "impression de classe", his view limited itself to a rural context and divided society between landowners and exploited labourers. His belief in the internationalism of the working class was orthodox socialism and, in contrast to Le Roy's optimism about an ultimate intermingling of the classes, he held that there was no hope for consensus between

1. Letter of 28 September 1901. See Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.81n.

2. Letter of 12 May 1897. Roger Mathé (ed.) Ibid., p.34.

the opposing camps. One of the clearest expressions of this inflexibility appeared in a letter written in 1908 to the royalist Georges Valois:

> [...] Tous les mondains d'Europe se ressemblent, ayant même genre de vie, mêmes moeurs. Et tous les paysans de tous les pays se ressemblent de même. Conclusion: Un Bourbonnais, par exemple, est plus rapproché, comme mentalité, d'un paysan allemand ou anglais que du châtelain dont il cultive la terre. [1].

Guillaumin's first opportunity to put theory into practice came in April 1905 when the socialist Michel Bernard, himself a peasant and who at Bourbon-l'Archambault a year earlier had formed the first agricultural union in the Allier, asked him for support. [2]. On 3 December 1905 he met with Bernard at the Hôtel de Ville in Moulins and helped to compose a constitution for the "Fédération des syndicats de cultivateurs de la région bourbonnaise". Bernard became secretary general of the organisation while Guillaumin assumed the editorship of its newspaper, Le Travailleur rural. [3]. Guillaumin, like Philippe, disliked party labels and although he served the spirit of socialism all his life, refused all active participation in politics. He saw his contribution primarily as that

1. Letter of 15 October 1908, Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.81.

2. The momentum of syndicalism in the countryside had grown steadily since 1891 and the strike of the bûcherons in the Cher. The upheavals culminated in the demonstrations of the Midi vine growers in 1907. For an analysis of this development between 1891-1914 see Philippe Gratton's "Premières luttes contre le capitalisme", Les Paysans, Paris 1972, pp.91-101.

3. Published quarterly, Le Travailleur rural first appeared in February 1906 and continued until the organisation foundered in 1911. The last edition appeared in December of that year. A volume of the articles Guillaumin wrote for the newspaper was published in 1977 at Moulins by the Editions des Cahiers bourbonnais and entitled Six Ans de lutte syndicale.

of an intellectual and an educator. Under this rubric he included the obligation to inform the landowners of the needs of the workers and, much more importantly in his eyes, to cultivate the peasant's intellect. In 1910 he wrote to Alexandre Noisserie, the Périgord novelist and disciple of Eugène Le Roy: "Moi-même, je vous avouerai que je n'ai aucun goût pour l'action politique et que, tout en suivant avec sympathie le mouvement socialiste, je ne fais partie d'aucun groupe et n'éprouve pas le besoin de militer dans cette voie. Au reste, l'éducation sociale convient mieux à mes aptitudes, à mon tempérament." [1.]

As we shall discover, Guillaumin considered himself very much in the traditional mould of the Romantic writer whose task was to serve as moral guide to his readers. In a draft of a letter to Charles Guieysse, editor of the avant-garde Pages libres and general secretary of the "Fédération des Universités populaires", Guillaumin showed himself quite aware that, although he tilled the land, he had a dual function: "Je suis un paysan avec l'âme d'un intellectuel et l'espèce en est rare, je vous l'affirme." [2.] Over the fifty years of his

1. Letter of 27 October 1910. See Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.201. To Eugène Fournière he had already admitted that, "[...] Je ne puis être [...] le paysan remueur de foules que vous voudriez; je ne vaux que par la pensée; je suis un faible, un timide, mal doué sous le rapport de la parole, difficulté de prononciation, difficulté d'élocution [...] D'ailleurs les foules m'effraient." (Letter of 14 December 1902. Roger Mathé, Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.48.) Compare the self-evaluation of another socially committed author, the ardently Republican Eugène Le Roy: "Chacun a ses defauts, il y en a qui sont trop „flacassiers„, moi, je ne le suis pas assez. Je ne sais pas négocier les affaires ni jouer au plus fin, soit en politique, soit autrement." (See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain périgordin, Bordeaux 1929, p.148.)

2. Outline of a letter intended for Guieysse, probably dating from July 1901, found among the novelist's

writing career his principal theme was the imperative of bridging the divide between manual and intellectual effort. This necessity appeared only too obvious among the Allier peasantry during the early years of the century: "Il y a chez les paysans une sorte d'antagonisme entre la science du livre et la science pratique. La plupart se moquent des jeunes gens qui ont le goût de la lecture, parce qu'ils croient que cela n'est bon qu'à les déporter du travail." [1] He believed---at the outset of his syndicalist activity at least ---that it was the peasant's ignorance of technological advances available to him, and not any innate conservatism, which entrenched his backwardness. [2]

papers after his death. See Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.44.

1. See the preface by Guillaumin to Henri Norre's La Retraite d'un cultivateur, Les Cahiers du Centre, Moulins, April 1914, p.iv. See also his preface (dated May 1938) to Contes de la Bergère, légendes et récits de Gascogne by Jeanne Combabessouse, a "maîtresse de ferme" and personal friend of Guillaumin's, in which he acknowledged their common objective: "Nous suivons notre destin sans nous poser en victimes, tâchant seulement de réserver sa part à la lecture, à la pensée par quoi s'élargit et s'embellit l'existence. Et nous formons le voeu d'une liaison féconde, jusqu'ici à peine amorcée entre l'acquis intellectuel et l'activité pratique." (No place and no date---probably Moulins 1938---p.8.)

2. See Jean Vidalenc's recent study of the French peasantry in which he maintains that the legacy of widespread illiteracy inherited from the first half of the nineteenth century was a fundamental cause of that conservatism among the workers which is often considered a 'natural' part of the peasant character. "L'attachement du paysan aux traditions venait autant de cette méconnaissance totale, ou presque, des changements possibles, des tentatives réussies, que d'un manque de ressources. (La Société française de 1815 à 1848, vol.I Le Peuple des campagnes, Paris 1970, p.12.)

Guillaumin was convinced that the amelioration of the material existence of the peasants could not be achieved without first effecting their moral transformation. It was not enough, he argued, that the workers should demand certain rights. They also had social duties to perform and must be seen to deserve a fairer return on their labour: "Je m'efforce en effet de déshabituer les militants de nos syndicats des moyens de basse polémique, et de montrer, à côté des injustices à réparer, des droits à obtenir, les devoirs dont il faut se pénétrer: car j'ai la conviction absolue que le développement de la conscience individuelle est indispensable pour obtenir de vraies améliorations sociales." [1]. About what these duties were he gave a more precise indication in the February 1907 number of Le Travailleur rural. Of the new breed of peasant he foresaw he wrote:

> Il faut donc:
> 1° qu'ils soient des syndiqués soucieux de leurs devoirs
> 2° qu'ils soient des hommes de conduite irréprochable, francs, consciencieux et loyaux
> 3° qu'ils soient déterminés à s'instruire. (p.3)

The high degree of idealism in his expectations for the workers is obvious from the above, and we shall see it reappear periodically in the novels, and especially in the final Syndicat de Baugignoux, based on his experience in organising rural labour. [2].

1. Letter written during the Summer of 1907 to Edouard Droz. See Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.63.

2. On occasion idealism carried Guillaumin to unrealistic lengths, as evidenced by his article on "Femmes et jeunes filles à la campagne" where he fulminated against marital disharmony: "Et, au lieu de voir les époux tirer à hue et l'autre à dia, ne vaudrait-il pas mieux qu'il y ait uniformité de vues dans les ménages, non seulement pour la résolution des petites difficultés quotidiennes, mais encore sur la façon de concevoir les grands problèmes de la destinée." (La Grande Revue, 10 July 1910, p.155.)

The enemy to whose overthrow Guillaumin was committed was the métayage method of land exploitation which he had himself seen in action in his grandparents' farm at Neverdière. Under this system the peasant made a contract with the landowner from whom he received a farm in exchange for an annual cash payment and a share in the yield from the land. The terms of such agreements varied greatly, but were often crippling for the tenant. The landowner was usually absent and his absolute authority devolved to his bailiff, or régisseur. Failure to meet the terms of the contract could result in eviction for the labourer and his family with little or no notice. Although the general trend over the second half of the nineteenth century had been away from large landholdings and towards an increase in the number of petits propriétaires, regions like the Allier and Les Landes proved the exception to the rule. Philippe Gratton claims that the Allier was the system's stronghold and that at the turn of the century there were more than 600 "fermiers généraux" (régisseurs) on the land. [1] R.D. Anderson confirms the unusually high percentage of métayers in the Allier and suggests that it was in reaction to this oppressive system that the peasants here consistently supported the Left at elections between 1870 and 1914: "These métayers were almost the only true peasant farmers to engage in social agitation before 1914, and were joined in this by the proletarian forestry workers. Since this region also contained coalfields and industrial centres, it followed the south in passing from Radicalism to Socialism, and by 1914

1. Philippe Gratton, Les Paysans, p.98.

the Socialist party was getting some of its highest votes there." [1.]

Given the high standard of moral improvement he had set for the peasants, it is hardly surprising that, after a brief initial period of success, his efforts on behalf of rural syndicalism brought a series of disappointments. As early as 1907, when the Federation's membership reached its peak of 1800 adherents, Guillaumin had voiced doubts about the feasibility of the organisation. In a letter to Daniel Halévy he wrote: "J'ai adopté une règle que je crois bonne et je fais de mon mieux---tout en restant hélas! très sceptique quant au résultat. Il y a certes des hommes très intelligents dans presque tous les groupes, mais la masse est si apathique, si défiante et même si méchante qu'on est plutôt tenté de désespérer." [2.] A year later he made the same complaint to Alexandre Boisserie: "Peut-être vous faites-vous pas mal d'illusions sur les paysans de chez nous? Oui, il en est quelques-uns de très intéressants et qui cherchent à s'instruire [...] mais combien ils sont rares, hélas! [...] Au fond,

1. R.D. Anderson, France 1870-1914: Politics and Society, London 1977, p.57. For discussion of the national pattern of métayage and the correlation with literary activity, see Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, pp.124-126; 433. For a defence of métayage and the Bourbonnais landowner see the unsigned article, "Métayers et propriétaires bourbonnais" which appeared in La Revue hebdomadaire, 21 October 1911, pp.358-374. It was written in reply to one by Guillaumin in the same publication (8 October 1910).

2. Letter of 8 April 1907. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.61.

voyez-vous, les masses paysannes sont les mêmes partout." [1]. The combination of the peasant's resistance to change and threats of retaliation by the landowners against anyone participating in union activity sealed the fate of this experiment by Guillaumin and Bernard. The Federation was dissolved in 1911, and in penning the final lines of the last issue of Le Travailleur rural (December 1911) Guillaumin did not conceal his bitterness in defeat. "Les paysans du Centre", he wrote, "avaient un organe qui prenait sérieusement leur défense; ils le laissent tomber par leur faute. Les bourgeois s'en réjouissent, c'est leur droit; mais ce qui est plus triste à dire, c'est que bien des cultivateurs riront avec eux."

1. Letter of 29 November 1910. Reproduced in Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, Paris 1966, p.390. See Guillaumin's autobiographical récit, "Nous étions valets de ferme" in La Revue bleue (1 December 1906) in which he addressed the following reminiscence to one of his childhood friends: "Tu as pour toutes choses nouvelles ---automobiles ou syndicats---un dédain qui frise l'hostilité. C'est dire que tu as les qualités et les défauts particuliers à ceux qui vivent dans la même ambiance de travail et de médiocrité où tu végètes. Vieux Jean, tu ressembles à bien d'autres." (p.693).

Emile Guillaumin: His Early Career 1893-1904.

Guillaumin's career as a novelist corresponds almost exactly with his period of syndicalist activity; his first novel, La Vie d'un simple, being published in 1904 and the last, Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, in 1912. His career as a writer and journalist, however, spanned both sides of these eight years and he remained productive up to his death in 1951.

A maturing social awareness caused him to abandon by 1891 earlier attempts to write verse, repudiating "le peu d'importance qu'a l'état d'âme d'un être et la futilité des confidences." [1.] Under the pseudonym, Max Audier, he began writing contes---more than one hundred and fifty of which he produced by 1951---adopting the more conducive medium of prose to develop his reformist themes. Selections of his earliest work having appeared a year earlier in La Quinzaine bourbonnaise, [2.] produced bi-monthly in Moulins by the local publisher Crépin-Leblond, the first of his contes were printed in the same review on 30 September 1894. Although he had plans for an edition of the best of them, only seven of the stories were collected during his lifetime and published under the title La Peine aux chaumières. [3.]

1. Quoted by Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, Paris 1966, p.118.

2. Re his first appearance in print, see Guillaumin's letter of 10 January 1904 to Stock. P.-V. Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, p.222.

3. Published by Cahiers nivernais, Nevers, April-May 1909. Dedicated to Charles-Louis Philippe, the volume included four stories which had previously appeared elsewhere: "La Vache" and "Hors de l'abîme" in La Quinzaine bourbonnaise (30 October 1898 and 30 December 1901) and "Jeannot" and "Gens comme il faut" in Pages libres (26 January and 12 May 1906).

Unlike Le Roy, who was writing about the peasants of Périgord and consistently shunned publicity of any sort, Guillaumin vigorously pursued literary contacts. He solicited writers from every social background---including Valery Larbaud, Charles-Louis Philippe and J.H. Rosny---to find publishers for his work, requested reviews from them and sought recommendations when he applied for literary prizes. He was quick to appreciate the novelty value in his dual capacity as paysan exploitant and writer, emphasising to Rosny on one occasion that, "Enfant du peuple, fils de paysans et paysan moi-même, n'ayant aucune étude, c'est par mon seul effort personnel que j'ai pu arriver à publier des livres." [1.] Hailed by Michel Ragon as the first peasant novelist, [2.] Guillaumin's reputation was undoubtedly unique. He was the first peasant writer since the poètes ouvriers of the 1840's to combine (from necessity) literary vocation with daily labour in the fields. In this he distinguished himself from Le Roy who abandoned his peasant background for a minor clerical position. Similarly, it was from her sempstress' atelier in the capital that Marguerite Audoux recorded in her novels memories of her days as a farm servant in the Sologne. [3.]

These seven stories were taken from a larger selection Guillaumin had made in 1905 for Stock who had plans for an edition which he eventually abandoned. On the occasion of the centenary of the writer's birth, the Editions des Cahiers bourbonnais published thirty-eight more of these stories under the title, Au Vieux temps: Contes et légendes (Moulins, 1973).

1. Letter of 27 November 1907 in which Guillaumin requested a recommendation for one of the 500fr. Prix Chauchard awarded by the "Comité de la Société des gens de lettres". Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.68.

2. See Michel Ragon, Histoire de la littérature prolétarienne en France, p.154.

3. See Louis Lanoizelée, Emile Guillaumin, écrivain et paysan, Paris 1952, p.16. "Le Bourbonnais est

More importantly, Guillaumin distanced himself from the ranks of 'regionalist' writers like Auguste Saulière (Guerres de la paroisse, 1880), Hector France (Marie queue de vache, 1883), Edgar Monteil (Grand village, 1885) or Jacques Lozère (Mariages aux champs, 1887) for whom working the land was at most a part-time occupation and who often were writers with independent means whose main interest in the countryside lay in its picturesque value.

Certain critics found it difficult to believe that a peasant should spend in writing what little spare time he enjoyed. After the success met by the publication of La Vie d'un simple, Ernest-Charles wrote in La Revue bleue that "/Guillaumin/ n'est ni tout à fait écrivain, ni tout à fait paysan.. Il vit la vie des champs en petit propriétaire qui surveille les travaux plutôt qu'il ne les accomplit." [1]. While it is true that since leaving Neverdière he had been his own master, at no time was he ever exempt from routine labour on the land. Like Philippe, he had witnessed enough deprivation in the lives of those around him that he could make it a major theme in his novels without ever having experienced it directly. He enjoyed, wrote Roger Mathé, "une aisance assez grande pour dissiper tout souci matériel, assez réduite pour astreindre à l'effort." [2].

> la patrie de plusieurs écrivains qui, à divers titres sont parvenus à la notoriété; Marguerite Audoux, Charles-Louis Philippe, Alain Fournier. Seul Emile Guillaumin est resté fidèle à la terre natale. Il a vu le jour, a vécu et est mort à Ygrande."

1. 18 June 1904, p.794.

2. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.48.

Daniel Halévy's incredulity prompted him to visit Ygrande on the suspicion that Guillaumin's notoriety rested on a hoax. Writing to Stock, Guillaumin confided that, "J'ai reçu la semaine dernière la visite inopinée de Daniel Halévy [...] qui m'a avoué être venu voir si j'étais bien réellement un paysan. Il est parti convaincu." [1.] Stock himself had harboured similar doubts, as is clear from his Mémorandum d'un éditeur: "J'avais cru à l'origine,---comme d'autres d'ailleurs ---qu'il y avait dans son cas du chiqué et que ce soi-disant paysan n'était qu'un métayer amateur; mais certains incrédules sont allés à Ygrande à l'improviste pour le surprendre---n'est-ce pas M.Daniel Halévy?---et, le trouvant la fourche aux mains ou en train de traire une vache, ils sont revenus de là-bas convaincus" (p.211). [2.]

In 1899 Guillaumin had published his Dialogues bourbonnais. The volume consisted of a series of vignettes, written in the Bourbonnais patois, which isolated different aspects of the peasant character. [3.] Although the impact of the work was

1. Letter of 22 February 1904. P.V.Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, p.251. Halévy made subsequent visits to Ygrande, in 1907 to gather material on the Bourbonnais unions for Pages libres, and again in 1920 and 1934. Accounts of these visits appear in his Visites aux paysans du Centre, Paris 1935.

2. Commenting on the general climate of opinion among critics in 1904 when La Vie was competing for the Prix Goncourt with, among others, Philippe's Marie Donadieu, Camille Gagnon wrote: "La Vie d'un simple avait failli avoir le Prix Goncourt [...] et beaucoup de critiques parisiens pensaient que ce n'était pas l'oeuvre d'un paysan mais d'un homme de lettres installé à la campagne. "See Gagnon's editorial remarks on Guillaumin's Au vieux temps; Contes et légendes (Moulin, 1973), p.12n.

3. Published by Editions Crépin-Leblond, Moulins. A 'translated' version appeared in Les Cahiers du Centre (Nevers, November-December 1912) under the title Au Pays des ch'tits gas. The content of the two works was almost identical, but in the second Guillaumin tried to widen the book's appeal by renouncing much of the phonetic spelling and the

inevitably reduced by the language employed, it was significant in that it established the author's disposition towards his peasant subject. Although Guillaumin's sympathy for the worker confronted with strenuous and repetitive labour is obvious, the temptation to idealise---not always resisted by Philippe---is avoided. Dialogues bourbonnais is enlivened by a sense of humour lacking in the later novels, but one which is often pointed when concentrating attention on those facets of the Bourbonnais peasant which exasperated Guillaumin. Avarice, social pretentiousness, conformism, xenophobia and submission to the bourgeoisie were all allowed a part in this corporate picture, but they never dominated or caused the observations to generate into cynicism. This decision to portray his subject 'warts and all' is sustained throughout the six novels and is consistent with the premium he placed on the moral and educational advancement of the peasantry. If the workers were to improve, it was necessary to show them where they were deficient. His concern to defend the peasants and ensure the survival of their separate identity did not take the form of a retreat into the past. The priority placed on picturesque customs and the cosy image of the untutored terrien béat was repudiated and Guillaumin firmly set apart from his predecessors of the Félibrige. "En un temps où l'on trouve dans les plus humbles chaumières des hameaux les plus lointains les catalogues de la Samaritaine et du Bon Marché, en un temps où le contact des populations rurales et urbaines devient toujours plus facile et s'accentue toujours plus, il semble tout à fait vain de

abbreviations necessary to transcribe the Bourbonnais dialect, and by bringing the syntax more into line with standard French.

vouloir conserver /l'/héritage des siècles morts." [1.]

His insistence on progress, and especially that in the education of the rural workers, had already drawn a letter of dissent from Frédéric Mistral. Writing to Guillaumin in 1902 he argued the case for a traditional peasantry and deplored its contamination---directly attributable to increased education---by urban influences. "L'illettré, il faut bien l'avouer, se faisait par lui-même un fonds d'observations toutes personnelles qui le rendait fort intéressant et comme indépendant d'esprit, il était bien supérieur à l'ouvrier des champs ou des villes qui pêche toutes ses idées dans les feuilles de chou et les journaux d'un sou." [2.]

Written during the period 1898-1900, Tableaux champêtres was published in 1901. [3.] Like Dialogues bourbonnais it was a panorama of life and countryside in Guillaumin's native province. The humanist nature of the author is immediately apparent in his preference for describing the peasant's labour on the land rather than picturesque detail of the countryside itself. Consistent with the sense of moderation that marked all his work, he did not ignore the occasional lighter moments which made the worker's lot more tolerable. Religious festivals, village dances and even games of skittles were portrayed with an affectionate humour that seemed to evaporate in his subsequent novels where the practical worries of his syndicalist activities and an increasing disillusionment with the peasants

1. Emile Guillaumin, "Femmes et jeunes filles à la campagne", La Grande Revue, 10 July 1910, p.149.

2. See Mistral's letter of 2 February 1902 reproduced by Paul Vernois in Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.454.

3. Editions Crépin-Leblond, Moulins.

took their toll. In 1902 the Académie Française awarded Guillaumin 500fr. from the Prix Montyon for Tableaux champêtres[1]. Such modest success was not enough to prevent occasional discouragement in the face of what the author interpreted as the law of diminishing returns. A year before the publication of La Vie d'un simple brought him national recognition, he warned the young Joseph Voisin, a peasant from Yzeure (Allier) who also had literary aspirations: "[...] Si vous êtes jeune, comme écrivain et poète je vous félicite [...] mais comme paysan, comme homme, je vous dis bien fort: mon ami, ne laissez pas prendre trop d'empire à ces goûts-là, vous vous en repentiriez plus tard [...] Je ne passe pas de jour sans me dire que ç'a été une sottise de m'engager dans cette voie." [2].

"Chacun de ses romans vise un but et l'ensemble de son oeuvre plaide la cause du prolétariat. C'est l'écrivain du peuple par excellence, du peuple des campagnes [...] Mais le livre à idée pénètre difficilement dans les chaumières [et] c'est pourquoi Guillaumin crut devoir écrire quelques articles de journaux." [3]. These "quelques articles" of which Voisin wrote in 1913 became a lifelong preoccupation for Guillaumin. He took up journalism in earnest immediately after the

1. He made use of the money to have published a selection of his early poetry, which appeared under the title Ma Cueillette (Crépin-Leblond, Moulins 1903).

2. Joseph Voisin, "Emile Guillaumin", La Grande Revue, 10 October 1913, p.599. Besides the study of Le Vrai visage d'Emile Guillaumin (Moulins, 1953), Voisin wrote a series of novels, the best known of which are Mathurin Barot (Paris, 1927), Francine et son village (Paris, 1931), and Fontaine revient (Moulins, 1945).

3. Ibid., p.606.

publication of La Vie d'un simple because, as suggested above, he felt its directness more useful than the novel in educating the peasantry. Despite its critical success in the capital, La Vie remained almost unread by the Bourbonnais peasants. Even the fact that Dialogues bourbonnais was written in their own dialect had not been enough to overcome their aversion to purchasing any book other than a yearly almanach, and Crépin-Leblond published the work at a loss. "On lit volontiers son journal, en province", wrote Voisin, "mais on ne se risque pas à demander un livre, le prix n'en fût-il que de un franc." [1.] Guillaumin persevered with the longer prose form, however, until the débâcle of the rural syndicates disabused him of any lingering faith in the literary acumen of the workers. Upon his return to Ygrande from the trenches on 1st January 1919 he continued his research into the rural community and its problems, producing a constant stream of articles and essays which only stopped with his death on 27th September 1951. This thesis must necessarily restrict itself to the work prior to the First War, and any references to his career beyond 1914 will be limited to those pertaining directly to his career as novelist. [2.]

1. Joseph Voisin, "Emile Guillaumin", La Grande Revue, 10 October 1913, p.596.

2. Among the highlights of this post-War period were his investiture as a Knight of the Legion of Honour in 1925 and the presidency of the "Association des Amis de Charles-Louis Philippe", a post he held from its inception in 1936 until his death. Readers interested in Guillaumin's career as polemicist, concerned mostly with the depopulation of the countryside and the peasants' lack of bargaining power, are directed to the bibliography appended to Roger Mathé's study, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.615 ff.

Emile Guillaumin: Preliminary Observations.

Although in several of his novels---Albert Manceau, adjudant (1906), Rose et sa Parisienne (1907) and Baptiste et sa femme (1911)---Guillaumin's scope included a study of the rustic in the environment of local village or town, his reputation rests on his portrayal of peasants working on the land. In this he added the dimension missing in Philippe's accounts of rural life and struck a balance between the bucolic, epitomised in Sand's romans champêtres, and the naturalism of Zola's La Terre, or even Balzac's Paysans. Despite his literary diet of Romantic fiction as an adolescent---especially Loti (Le Roman d'un Spahi; Madame Chrysanthème), Lamartine, Hugo and George Sand (Le Meunier d'Angibault)---even his earliest prose was remarkably free from any of the trappings of Romanticism. In both the characterisation and the setting for his novels he avoided use of the picturesque or exotic. He observed once in a conversation with Joseph Voisin: "A quoi bon [...] s'attarder à décrire les beautés de la nature; Chateaubriand a parlé de ces choses mieux que nous ne saurions le faire." [1] In Le Meunier d'Angibault it was Sand's attack on the system of tenant farming which attracted him more than the laboured naïvete of her style. [2]

1. Joseph Voisin, "Emile Guillaumin", La Grande Revue, 10 October 1913, p.603. According to Voisin, Guillaumin had decorated the walls of his study with portraits of Maupassant, Emile Erckmann and Alexandre Chatrian, as well as those of Loti and Hugo.

2. In his article, "La Terre délaissée", he quoted one of Sand's outbursts in Le Meunier against the fermier général to reinforce his own argument against métayage: "On peut dire que l'argent passe dans leur sang, qu'ils s'y attachent de corps et d'âme. Il serait fort inutile de s'indigner contre eux: ils ne peuvent pas être autrement. Aucune

As we shall discover in examining La Vie d'un simple, the technique in most of his work was essentially anti-dramatic. In contrast to Philippe's creation and manipulation of types and his manufacturing of conflict, which occasionally bordered on melodrama, Guillaumin's approach appeared much simpler. His view of les humbles was a less tortured one than that of Philippe's---he did not view his subjects as types in a philosophical tug-of-war as his friend had done---the emphasis falling on the peasantry as a homogeneous entity. Guillaumin himself recognised the lack of structural complexity in his work, writing to Gabriel Maurière in 1908: "Vous avez le don des scènes impressionnantes et dramatiques---qualité qui me manque presque totalement et que je vous envie." [1] The single significant influence on the Romantics was one of direction. It encouraged, as we have already noted, an inclination to exhort and guide his readers to a brighter future.

His style owed much more to the emphasis on realistic---and credible---detail inherited from Balzac (Les Paysans), Tolstoy and Dickens (Oliver Twist) whose works he found increasingly attractive after the vagaries of the Romantics. Exactitude was more important than imagination in conveying the uneventful peasant existence where interesting events were as rare as

idée sociale ne les soutient; la digestion devient la grande affaire de leur vie." (La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 October 1910, p.210).

1. Letter of 12 March 1908. See Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.75. Gabriel Maurière (pseud. for Henri Legrand) was a writer of peasant origins from Charmont (Aube). He became a teacher at the Ecole Normale in Blois, and later an inspector. He received the Prix Quillet for his novel, A la gloire de la terre (Editions de „la Vraie France„, Paris 1924).

colourful speech. Throughout the novels Guillaumin allowed his characters to speak for themselves; not directly---there is very little dialogue in any of the works---but rather through gesture. Gesture seemed more important to him because he recognised that the French peasant, in the Bourbonnais at least, was essentially taciturn. [1] Unlike Maupassant's gift for concentrating into several well chosen aperçus the essence of a character, the effectiveness of Guillaumin's technique depended upon the accumulative impact of a long series of carefully noted and repetitive detail. This approach tended to complement the plodding, methodical nature of the peasant who was not given to impetuosity of speech or action, and to suggest the cyclical routine in his responsibilities to the land. Guillaumin shared with his peasant neighbours a suspicion of visible enthusiasm, and a cynicism common to those whose livelihood was never invulnerable from a sudden hail- or rainstorm. It was a reticence which was reflected in the tedious deliberateness of much of his prose and the unspectacular choice of themes. While intensely interested in the welfare of the Bourbonnais workers, he rarely ventured beyond the boundaries of his province and, despite pleas to the peasants to broaden their interests, he himself remained distrustful of 'foreign' influences---especially those from the capital. "J'estime sa délicatesse", wrote Halévy, "son souci de clarté, de raison, mais qu'ils sont courts, les horizons où il s'enferme [...] C'est un sage et

1. Compare the following observation by Paul Vernois on this mutisme paysan: "[A]fin[] qu'on n'évoque pas certains sentiments comme l'espérance ou la joie de la réussite le campagnard superstitieusement les évite pour ne pas préjuger du Destin ou rejeter [son] masque de médiocrité résignée." (Le Roman rustique de George Sand a Ramuz, p.263).

c'est un stoïque [mais] sa sagesse est terne, son stoïcisme est sans lumière." [1.] Unlike Zola's La Terre there was nothing in Guillaumin's portrayal of the countryside to shock contemporary sensibilities. His peasants are chaste and their language never vulgar. Even transcriptions from the Bourbonnais dialect are rare, although local turns of phrase are incorporated into the narrative. [2.] Commenting on the uniform simplicity of the sentence structure employed in the novels, Roger Mathé interpreted this as "[...] la méfiance de l'autodidacte envers les périodes complexes semées de pièges grammaticaux." [3.]

Some of the novels---Albert Manceau, adjudant, Baptiste et sa femme, Le Syndicat de Baugignoux---may be regarded as romans à thèse in their preoccupations with antimilitarism, rural depopulation and syndicalism. Only very rarely, however, during this period of association with Michel Bernard were social concerns expressed at the expense of vraisemblance, as they were, for example, in Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant (1900).

1. Daniel Halévy, Visites aux paysans du Centre, Paris 1935, p.161.

2. In his article, "Emile Guillaumin" (La Grande Revue, 10 October 1913), Joseph Voisin provided an anecdote from one of his several visits to the farm at Ygrande. Watching Guillaumin lead his three cows to pasture, he observed that, "[...] il crie fort comme tous les paysans, mais jamais, chose curieuse, il ne sortira de sa bouche une seule phrase qui ne soit de bon français." (p.608).

3. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin; 1894-1951, p.20. Mathé seems on less secure ground when he suggested that, "Les plats pays de l'Allier, aux lignes discrètes, lui ont donné le sens de la mesure, un parfait équilibre, l'horreur des excès dans les actes et les mots." (Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.18).

His overriding concern was with the immediate reality of the local peasantry and not abstract political or social systems. It was only in the final Syndicat de Baugignoux that this humanism and the balance between credibility and polemics was in danger of being swamped by political pamphleteering.

Some critics considered that Guillaumin's emphasis on detail was exaggerated and, rather than suggesting the nature of the peasant subject, made for a turgid style. Ernest-Charles, while savouring the authenticity of a work like La Vie d'un simple, regretted that it had "[...] un peu le défaut d'être un guide pratique des travaux des champs." He also objected on aesthetic grounds to what he considered Guillaumin's lack of discrimination in deciding what detail was to be included. He abhorred, for example---with some justification---the prominence given to the descriptions of mucking out stables and cowsheds. [1.] Jean-Richard Bloch denied that, in the strict sense, Guillaumin was a novelist at all:

> On n'y trouve ni intrigue ni dénouement. Guillaumin ne raconte pas d'histoires. Il ne sait pas nouer les cordons d'une anecdote. Son art est plus simple: rien n'intéresse sa sensibilité hors le travail des champs. [2.]

This view is oversimplified. While Bloch's remarks may arguably be applied to novels like La Vie d'un simple, Près du sol or Le Syndicat de Baugignoux---those, namely, which were entirely devoted to the peasant subject---they are not appropriate to a study of the other works. Albert Manceau, adjudant and Baptiste et sa femme in particular, although never entirely

1. See La Revue bleue, 18 June 1904, pp.794-795.

2. See Henry Poulaille, Nouvel Age littéraire, Paris 1930, p.296.

abandoning the rural milieu, did take Guillaumin beyond the farm into army barracks and industrial towns, and required a more imaginative approach to narrative than had elsewhere been necessary.

In an otherwise ill-informed and patronising volume, Mary Duclaux permitted herself several competent observations on Guillaumin's work. "Obstinate, precise, Guillaumin delves his style as a peasant tills his land---not (like Philippe or Madame Audoux, who are equally fastidious and minute) in order to produce a certain effect of beauty or impression of sensibility, but in the effort to render a just, exact account of what he has seen." [1]. While she did discern the emphasis on realism central to Guillaumin's style, she too denied him any literary talent as a novelist. The double-edged verdict on La Vie d'un simple was representative of her general assessment: "Regarded as art it is dull, monotonous, and bare; and yet, considered as life, it is singularly touching." [2].

The judgment of Florian-Parmentier was considerably harsher and saw the natural flow of Guillaumin's prose as having been

1. Mary Duclaux, Twentieth Century French Writers (Reviews and Reminiscences), London 1919, p.236. An Englishwoman who went to live in France in 1888, she harboured some singularly naïve---one is tempted to say 'middle class'---notions about the peasantry. "[...] We admire the French peasant, his frugality, his industry, his endurance are indeed beyond all praise; his economy is marvellous, and such is his good humour that he makes a pleasure of his self-denial; miserably lodged, poorly fed, he is conscious of no inferiority; he knows himself to be the backbone of France." (p.223) Our examination of La Vie d'un simple, Le Syndicat de Baugignoux and Le Roy's Jacquou and L'Ennemi de la mort will demonstrate to what extent her generalisations---suspiciously reminiscent of George Sand---were optimistic.

2. Mary Duclaux, Ibid., p.37.

checked by the various influences of his random literary education:

> M.Emile Guillaumin, modeste cultivateur, aurait pu nous donner des oeuvres extraordinaires, s'il avait su sauvegarder sa spontanéité. Malheureusement, il s'est pourvu d'une culture de hasard qui contrarie parfois l'élan de ses instincts. Il a d'ailleurs, un style d'emprunt dont le soin fait mieux ressortir les incorrections. [1.]

The precise nature of the "culture de hasard" was not divulged, and it seems at least a debatable proposition that formal instruction in literary criticism be a prerequisite for competence. Exactly what these implied influences might be which so paralysed Guillaumin's nascent style is hard to imagine. They certainly did not include Philippe, as Paul Vernois suggested. [2.] While the two novelists might have shared a common inspiration for their work, and were undoubtedly united in their contribution to bringing the figure of the worker within the compass of serious literature, neither style nor choice of theme suggests influence. Little could be further from the slow, measured rhythm of Guillaumin's prose than the flights of lyricism and occasional preciosity we noted in Philippe's work. Neither could the cynical common sense of the Ygrande peasant have a much starker opposite than the metaphysical aspects of Philippe's thought which found expression in his almost mystical conception of destiny. What is closer to the truth is that Guillaumin was encouraged, but not influenced, by his friend. Philippe had undoubtedly

1. Florian-Parmentier, La Littérature et l'époque; Histoire de la littérature française de 1885 à nos jours, Paris 1914, p.451.

2. See Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.179. "Surtout Guillaumin subit l'influence de son ami et voisin de Cérilly, Charles-Louis Philippe, si attentif à l'humble drame des pauvres."

acted as something of a mentor, recommending certain authors ---Tolstoy, Dostoievsky and Claudel, among others---and putting Guillaumin in touch with men of letters and publishers in the capital. In purely literary matters, however, one is compelled to agree with Mathé's assessment of Philippe that, "L'ancien candidat à Polytechnique, affiné par la vie parisienne, explorant maintes directions, écrivain souvent précieux ne peut communier avec l'autodidacte qui cherche à exprimer naïvement l'unique petit monde où il vit enfermé." [1].

1. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.106.

Emile Guillaumin: The Novels.

La Vie d'un simple.

The only immediate influence on his first and most important novel, La Vie d'un simple, to which Guillaumin admitted was that of Le Roy. "Eugène Le Roy", he wrote to Edouard Droz, "est sans conteste le précurseur et le maître dans le genre de roman où nous nous essayons." [1] It was, in fact, after a reading of Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant, the epic of the Périgord peasantry, that Guillaumin undertook the history of his Bourbonnais 'hero', Tiennon. In a letter to Le Roy's disciple, Alexandre Boisserie, he declared: "Je suis très heureux que vous mettiez mon livre en parallèle avec Jacquou. Ils sont bien en effet de la même famille; ils sont même „père et fils„ si l'on peut dire, car c'est Jacquou qui m'a donne l'idée de La Vie." [2] The novel was first published in March 1904 by the Parisian editor, Stock

1. Letter of 30 September 1907. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.67. Originally, Guillaumin had wanted to call his novel Mémoires d'un métayer. In a letter to Stock (15 October 1903) he signalled his intention to change it to either La Vie d'un simple or Près du sol, fearing that his first choice might appear "un peu prosaïque." See P.-V. Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, p.215.

2. Letter of 27 October 1910. See Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.176. Vernois suggests another work---uncorroborated by Guillaumin himself---which was preparatory to La Vie. This was a treatise by a certain Méplain and Taisy, Histoire d'un domaine du département de l'Allier et du grand Jacquet (Moulins, 1868), whose social concern was such, according to Vernois, to awaken in the young Guillaumin "une vocation d'écrivain social que l'expérience et la réflexion allaient confirmer." (Ibid., p.188).

and awarded the 1500fr. Prix Montyon by the Académie Française in Spring of the following year. [1]

In one respect those critics who questioned Guillaumin's claim to be a novelist were justified. La Vie d'un simple lacks imaginative plot structure and follows, rather, the 'natural' pattern of the unfolding of the hero's life. Dramatic incidents are rare---the memorable events in the peasant's experience being largely restricted to births, baptisms, marriages and funerals---and attention is concentrated on the minutiae of his daily routine.

The first-person narrative form is used, the author adopting the device of re-telling a story imparted to him. In the foreword the reader is informed that the life in question is that of old Tiennon who lives on the farm bordering that of the author. It is admitted that, "[sa vie] n'offre rien de bien saillant; c'est une pauvre vie monotone de paysan, semblable

1. Between 1904 and 1974 Stock issued seventeen republications of La Vie d'un simple. In June 1922 Nelson published a second 'version' of the work incorporating numerous but inconsequential alterations to the text made by the author. (The Stock editions dating from 1943 constitute a third 'version' in that they include only part of these alterations.) Other editions were issued by Delamain et Boutelleau (Paris 1943); Les Editions Nationales (Paris) 1945; Editions Rencontre (Lausanne) 1961; Livre de Poche (Paris) 1972. Selected passages (together with extracts from Au Pays des ch'tits gas, La Peine aux chaumières and Tableaux champêtres) were published by Crépin-Leblond (Moulins) 1939. Having been refused by Duckworth in 1912, an English translation by Marguerite Holden was published by Schoyen & Blount (London) 1918. A bilingual edition by L.Cons was published by Guin & Co. (New York) no date. Borgens Førlag (Copenhagen) issued a Danish translation in 1948. All references to the text are taken from the 1934 Stock edition.

à beaucoup d'autres." The reader is also warned not to expect any of the idealised sucreries to which he might have become accustomed in accounts of peasant existence. Tiennon, like all of Guillaumin's rural characters, is a credible blend of the good, the bad and the ordinary. "[...] Il lui est arrivé d'être égoïste et de ne valoir pas cher; il lui est arrivé d'être humain et bon [...]".

Apart from its obvious benefit for the novel's sense of authenticité, this first-person convention---the way Guillaumin manipulates it here, at least---provides a convenient escape from the linguistic trap which caught George Sand and others writing about the countryside. By placing himself between the reader and the peasant subject the author can act as a filter, interpreting and restructuring Tiennon's reminiscences to make them comprehensible to a wider public. In the foreword, the author reproduces part of a conversation between the peasant and himself: "[Tu] ne vas pas rapporter les choses comme je les dis; je parle trop mal... Les messieurs de Paris ne comprendraient rien," objects Tiennon. To which the author replies, "[...] Je vais tâcher d'écrire de façon qu'ils comprennent sans effort; mais en respectant votre pensée de telle sorte que le récit soit bien de vous quand même." Guillaumin left himself free to interpret a peasant 'tone' in his writing, avoiding the imperative for wholesale transcription or an obligation to burden the narrative with specific examples of local speech. [1] We have already seen to what extent

1. See Guillaumin's preface to Ceux de chez nous by Marcel Contier (Moulins, 1934). "Que les tournures pittoresques, les mots de terroir n'aient point l'air d'être là pour le relief, en suite d'une patiente recherche, mais par l'effet d'un jaillissement spontané, à leur place naturelle [...]"

George Sand, who attempted a similar role as interpreter in François le champi, was inexpert in incorporating such specifics into her style. Berrichon was not---despite what she might have liked to think---her native idiom. Her example also illustrated a danger confronting any writer, regardless of social background, attempting to translate the apparent simplicity of the peasant character into literary expression. A gulf separates the writer, by definition sensitive to image and choice of language, and the peasant for whom speech is alone important as a means of communication and who is too occupied to notice the beauty in a morning mist or setting sun. Nowhere was this better illustrated than in the many discrepancies, between style and subject, several of which we have already noted, in George Sand's François le champi and La Mare au diable. As will be seen, Guillaumin did not, despite his advantage of being a peasant by birth, always manage to avoid the incongruous.

Etienne Bertin was born in 1823 on a farm in Agonges near Bourbon l'Archambault. The narrative opens with Tiennon's earliest memories as a child of four years and spans most of the remainder of the century, ending with the aged peasant in his seventies who provides the author with his story. The physical setting, from place names indicated in the work, is the region surrounding Ygrande, with Bourbon the closest town, followed by Moulins at a distance of some twenty kilometres. Son of a métayer, Tiennon himself spends his life farming other people's land and over the years changes tenancies no less than thirteen times. His longest one, and that to which La Vie gives most attention, is on a farm called "la Creuserie" located between Bourbon and Franchesse. Like his father before him, he is eventually driven from his few hectares by the

intransigence and greed of the bourgeois landlord. Eventually, ageing and a widower, he is taken in by his children to live out his days helping them as he can to manage their own métairie.

"Guillaumin was the first defender of the peasants", wrote Theodore Zeldin, "who did not idealise them or try to put heroic qualities into them. He consciously attempted to explain them to townsmen who wondered whether they had brains or hearts." [1]. If Jacquou le croquant inspired Guillaumin to write La Vie, certainly none of Le Roy's revolutionary zeal, which raised his peasants up in arms against the Périgord landowners, was transmitted to the Bourbonnais novelist. A reasoned acceptance of intellectual and technological advance among the peasantry ---not the burning down of the nearest château--was the manner in which their best interests would be served. Guillaumin's polemic point is made gradually---one is tempted to use the word 'impressionistically'---by the cumulative effect of a constant stream of suffering portrayed in the petits événements of the peasants' life. The monotony of hunger and cold, and the futility of labour which fails to provide even basic necessities while at the same time forcing the worker to submit to arbitrary authority, pleads a more moving and convincing case for the peasantry than does Le Roy's fiery propaganda. It was precisely the lack of bitterness and the emphasis on moderation in La Vie that recommended Guillaumin to the conservative Rachilde, wife of Alfred Vallette and one of the founders of the Mercure de France. Her favourable reception of the novel, however, was tempered by the suspicion that, in

1. Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945, vol.I, p.134.

subordinating dramatic impetus so completely to realism, La Vie was always in danger of passing from the realm of literature into journalism. Anticipating Ernest-Charles' charge, made in La Revue bleue (18 June 1904), that Guillaumin's prose was too 'factual', she mused that: "Peut-être [l'histoire] n'est-elle, en effet, que le fidèle rapport au jour le jour d'une existence de paysan." [1].

Others found the thematic and stylistic simplicity of the novel unreservedly to their taste. Lucien Descaves, who had no personal friendship with the author to pamper, was enthusiastic. "C'est une oeuvre belle et saine [...]", he wrote to Guillaumin. "Je ne connais pas d'étude plus complète et plus véridique de la vie du paysan et vous provoquez l'émotion par une simplicité dont il y a peu d'exemples, depuis Erckmann-Chartrian, dans notre littérature [...] En tout cas, soyez fier de votre livre à travers duquel on aimera, comme je fais, l'auteur sans le connaître:" [2]. Avoiding the dubious comparison with the two Alsatian historical novelists, Jules Bertaut admired the authority with which La Vie was written, and considered it without contest Guillaumin's most successful work. It was a literary milestone, being the first fictional account of peasant life undertaken by a peasant himself. In Bertaut's praise for it as the author's "confession", however, lies an implication that the subsequent works were inferior, because necessarily repetitive.

> Son premier livre, La Vie d'un simple, est aussi son meilleur ouvrage. La raison en est aisée à découvrir.

1. Mercure de France, May 1904, p.466.

2. Letter of 22 March 1904. See Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.674.

> Emile Guillaumin est surtout un instinctif. C'est un fils de la terre, et son premier, son unique sujet, c'est lui-même. Aussi, son livre de début est-il une confession [...] Confession émouvante; la vie d'un homme des champs racontée par un qui l'a vécue. [1.]

Charles-Louis Philippe, writing to Guillaumin from Paris (22 March 1904), expressed a guarded enthusiasm for the novel. Perhaps acknowledging the excesses to which his own style was susceptible, he particularly admired the unemotive manner in which Guillaumin presented the peasants' case. "Vous savez, mon vieux, vous racontez très bien, l'émotion est bien dosée, le vrai mot, la vraie situation sont mis en valeur." He did not fail to point out to his friend, however, those passages where Guillaumin indulged a writer's sensitivity to the extent of undermining the credibility of his peasant characters. "Alors c'est vous qui nous arrivez avec de la littérature, des souvenirs de lecture." [2.]

Lucien Jean's assessment of the novel in L'Ermitage was somewhat ambiguous: "[...] Je tiens à le signaler comme un événement en dehors de la littérature, comme l'expression spontanée de la vie d'une classe, d'une époque." [3.] Although maintaining that La Vie was "beyond" literature, he did not mean that in the same way as Marcel Martinet or Charles Albert when they suggested the need for new aesthetic criteria to be applied to proletarian literature. Jean was merely commenting on the unique authority with which a novel about peasants could be written by one of their number. When compared with

1. Jules Bertaut, Les Romanciers du nouveau siècle, Paris 1912, p.269.
2. See P.-V.Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, p.227.
3. L'Ermitage, June 1904, p.160.

the efforts of the Romantics or Naturalists to bring the people into their work, La Vie was indeed beyond the literature that middle class novelists and public had to that point experienced.

> [...] Lorsqu'il s'agit de milieux populaires ou excentriques, d'où surgit une vie expressive, violente ou élémentaire, l'auteur y a passé le plus souvent; il a été un voyageur curieux. Ce n'est pas le cas ici. Il s'agit d'un homme qui a été, qui est encore un paysan, qui a vécu sa jeunesse en paysan, et non en homme de lettres qui se documente. 1.

Writing a year later, Paul Dupray came much closer to suggesting, in a short and patronising review, that the value of La Vie lay in its sociological rather than its literary significance.

> Le livre est dédié aux messieurs et aux dames de Moulins, de Paris et d'ailleurs. Je crois qu'ils veulent bien s'intéresser à ce tableau véridique de l'existence d'un homme des champs, ils y prendront quelque intérêt. Les mémoires d'un métayer sont une excellente contribution de la vie rurale. 2.

> Le père Tiennon est mon voisin; c'est un bon vieux tout courbé par l'âge qui ne saurait marcher sans son gros bâton de noisetier. Il a un collier de barbe claire, très blanche, les yeux un peu rouges, une verrue au bord du nez; la peau de son visage est blanche aussi comme sa barbe, d'un blanc graveleux, dartreux. Il porte toujours,---sauf pendant les mois d'été,---une grosse blouse de cotonnade serrée à la taille par une ceinture de cuir, un gros pantalon d'étoffe bleue, une casquette de laine dont il rabat les bords sur

1. L'Ermitage, June 1904, p.160.

2. La Grande Revue, 15 December 1905, p.584.

> ses oreilles, un foulard de coton
> mal noué, et des sabots de hêtre
> cerclé d'un lien de tôle. [1].

It is clear from these opening lines of the foreword that the picturesque has a role to play in Guillaumin's life of the peasant. The minute description reflects a lifetime's association with the workers and enhances the impression of authenticity which attaches to La Vie. Examples of physical description such as that reproduced above are, however, extremely rare. After this initial burst of detail, the physical aspect of Tiennon is virtually ignored in the rest of the novel. The picturesque is more readily conveyed in details of local custom, such as the ritual of stopping clocks in the houses of the dead and emptying out the water basins where the souls of the deceased wash before departing for heaven. Inventories of typical bridal dowries are given, their meagreness itself a comment on the poverty of Guillaumin's subjects. Tiennon's wife Victoire, for example, had brought with her "un lit, une armoire, un peu de linge et trois cents francs d'argent---ce qui était beau pour l'époque." [2]. The importance of bread around which the peasants' simple diet centred is emphasised in passages reminiscent of Solange and the pain noir of the Blanchard household. On one occasion the young Tiennon, having described the scraps thrown to the family dog, continues: "Notre nourriture, à nous, n'était guère plus fameuse, à la vérité. Nous mangions du pain aussi noir que l'intérieur de la cheminée, et graveleux comme s'il eût contenu une bonne

1. For the physical characteristics of Tiennon, Guillaumin took as his model an ageing peasant neighbour, a certain père Gillardin. See Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.212n.

2. La Vie d'un simple, Paris 1934, p.112.

dose de gros sable de rivière; il était fait de seigle moulu brut; toute l'écorce restait mêlée à la farine; on prétendait que c'était plus nourissant." [1].

The lighter aspects of rural life are not ignored as the reader is given glimpses of the worker passing his few leisure hours in games of skittles or at "des bals champêtres qu'on appelait les „vijons„ et, en hiver, les veillées." [2]. Certain less attractive facets of peasant existence are exposed and betray that impatience with his compatriots which motivated Guillaumin's efforts to reform them. Brawls and vendettas between farm labourers and villagers are common, and recall those between rival bands of compagnons on their "tour de France" in the mid-nineteenth century. "[...] Soixante années ont passé depuis", observes Tiennon, "et l'antagonisme dure encore [...] entre les garçons du village et ceux des fermes. [3]. Descriptions also abound of centuries old patterns of working the land which, although they convey a certain rustic charm, insist more importantly on the inefficiency and physical hardship involved.

The picturesque, then, does not exist---as both Ernest-Charles and Rachilde feared---for its own sake. La Vie was more than a compilation of observations and brought Guillaumin into the arena of socially 'committed' literature where imagination played an essential role. The raw material for the narrative was certainly factual, and taken from four principal sources. Far from dictating a personal "confession" as Bertaut

1. La Vie d'un simple, p.7.
2. Ibid., p.64.
3. Ibid., p.91.

suggested, Guillaumin relied on accounts by his grandparents and the elderly peasants around Ygrande about certain historical events like the revolution of 1848 and the Coup d'Etat, and about living conditions in the countryside during the early part of the nineteenth century. As Tiennon enters his later years, the author can supplement the narrative with his own childhood recollections and later observation of the peasants around the turn of the century to create a working model---thanks to the slow pace of change in rural areas---of peasant existence in the preceding decades.

Without an imaginative synthesis of his source material, however, Guillaumin could never have produced that illusion of reality which critics of all shades of opinion agreed he achieved. The charge that his work was too 'factual' was based on a misunderstanding of the technique employed. Rachilde and Ernest-Charles mistook the different perspective Tiennon applied to life for a lack of perspective on the part of the author. Because the peasant, as Guillaumin saw him, is a cautious, shrewd and unemotional creature who has learned to confront life one day at a time, the narrative is developed at a slow, chronological and regular pace. The death of a lamb is related with much the same detail as that of a neighbour, and digressive anecdotes with the same intensity as the demise of Tiennon's own daughter. No one appreciated more precisely than Roger Mathé a skilful marriage of style and character in La Vie:

> Par exemple, le désastre causé à ses récoltes par la grêle du 21 juin 1861, le bouleversa aussi profondément que le décès de son épouse. La substitution de la charrue à l'araire le frappe plus que les changements de régime [...] Tiennon a bien le sens du relatif et de la perspective, mais sa perspective n'est

> pas la nôtre, ses préoccupations non plus. Il parle comme il devait normalement parler, étant données les prémices. [1.]

Guillaumin's principal theme was the injustice perpetrated by the métayage system which, as well as imposing meagre returns on the peasant's labour, often condemned him to cramped and poorly heated lodgings. Although Guillaumin had never himself been subject to the worst abuses of this system, hundreds of his contemporaries in the Allier, like the Bertin family, found themselves living, several generations under one roof, in conditions that bred not only disease but promiscuity. "[...] Dans l'unique pièce des maisonnées pauvres, c'est tous les spectacles mêlés, la misère de chacun s'étalant aux yeux de tous sans possibilité contraire." [2.] Another of the dangers risked by the peasant was the arbitrary cruelty of his masters. Guillaumin's uncompromisingly hostile representation of the bourgeois overlord derives directly from the portrait of M.de Nansac in Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant. In a work acknowledged for its lack of violent recrimination, the treatment of M.Gorlier, the owner of the first farm Tiennon worked as the head of a household, is uncharacteristically severe. His nature is as uncomplicated and intractable as the 'advice' he gives his new workers: "Obéir et travailler, c'est votre rôle; je ne vous demande pas autre chose." [3.] He has the odious affectation of addressing individual tenants as "Chose" and invites his friends to amuse themselves on his estate by assisting at the peasant's mealtime where they can ridicule both the food and speech.

1. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.256.

2. La Vie d'un simple, p.86.

3. Ibid., p.151.

We saw in our examination of Philippe's novels to what extent the conflict there was a uniquely 'proletarian' one. With the exception of La Mère et l'enfant, the bourgeois element was restricted to secondary and tertiary characters or, more often, eliminated. Guillaumin, however, had a more imminent conception of the role class conflict had to play in the social injustices he was trying to expose. In all his work the figure of the middle class oppressor is easily detected, and he used characters like Gorlier to particularise attributes of this oppression. It was not only the landowners whom the peasants had to confront, but also the whole judicial system ---a representative part of a political, religious and military Establishment---which they saw weighted against them. Judicial tyranny was more to be feared than eviction because it removed them from a familiar rural context and placed them in an environment where they were without resource. Through centuries of experience the peasants had become resigned to abandoning one métairie and adapting quickly to a new one, but they were powerless in the face of fines or imprisonment. Tiennon, in relating one of his earliest recollections of an eviction where the master had also threatened legal action, observes that, "[...] mes parents savaient qu'ils allaient au devant d'un congé immédiat; cette conséquence prévue les laissa donc indifférents. Mais la menace d'un procès les effraya beaucoup [puisque] devant les juges, avec les meilleures raisons, les malheureux se trouvent avoir tort; c'était une vérité déjà connue." [1]

National service, which deprived the métairies of vital free labour, was regarded as part of this general conspiracy

1. La Vie d'un simple, p.71.

against the peasantry. At a time when conscripts could be 'bought out' of their military obligations for 500 to 1100fr., the rural family, whose meagre wealth often consisted of implements and animals rather than cash, was at an obvious disadvantage. Tiennon's mother had, however, managed to save 500fr. apiece for each of his two brothers. "Ma mère disait souvent", remarks Tiennon, "[...] qu'elle préférerait les voir mourir que partir soldats." [1.]

If Tiennon is accepted in a representative role, then the relationship of the Bourbonnais peasantry with the Church was an ambivalent one. It is possible that Guillaumin, who was not a religious man, allowed himself to be influenced by the treatment of the subject in Jacquou le croquant and Le Moulin du Frau. Le Roy, an unrepentant libre penseur who detested the hierarchical structure of the Church as tyrannical and conducive to corruption---and who took a particular dislike to the Jesuits---was prepared to admit, in characters like Father Bonal (Jacquou) and one of the parish priests in Moulin, the compassionate nature of members of its lower echelons. In La Vie d'un simple, Tiennon retains two childhood impressions of the clergy. He recounts how, on a rare visit to Bourbon, he waited hours in freezing temperatures for his father to return from some errands. The boy's discomfort was made more acute by the aroma of food being prepared in the kitchens of the prosperous townspeople. "Le curé et ses vicaires", for example, "mangeaient la soupe au parfum suave et d'autres bonnes choses." [2.] This picture is softened, however, by a

1. La Vie d'un simple, p.44.
2. Ibid., p.37.

subsequent description of the strict but humane priest who taught the boy his catechism. The alternating perspective on religion continues throughout the novel, with the undesirable aspects of Catholicism---and the peasants' credulity---parodied most successfully in an incident which occurs just after the outbreak of the Franco-Prussian war. In an atmosphere of near hysteria produced by the spectre of conscription, the particularly harsh Winter of 1870 and a smallpox epidemic, the local curé, reminiscent of Camus' père Paneloux, takes advantage of the moment to harangue his flock to acts of reparation. Throughout his life Tiennon adopts a commonsensical attitude, rejecting the most obvious excesses of the Church and its intervention in his daily routine. He considers himself a Catholic, however, and regularly hears Mass every second Sunday. His religion, like every other aspect of his existence, is expressed in terms of its relationship to the land which remains the peasant's overriding preoccupation: "Je croyais fermement par exemple, à l'existence d'un Etre suprême qui dirigeait tout, réglait le cours des saisons, nous envoyait le soleil et la pluie, le gel et la grêle. Et comme notre travail, à nous cultivateurs, n'est propice que si la température veut bien le favoriser, je m'efforçais de plaire à ce maître des éléments qui tient entre ses mains une bonne part de nos intérêts." [1].

Into the hermetic rural community Guillaumin evokes, intrudes the occasional reference to events taking place in the 'outside' world. History intersects with the narrative, but its terms of reference are those which lie within the

1. La Vie d'un simple, p.250.

peasant experience. The abstract concept of politics on a national scale, for example, holds little interest for the worker. The news of the fall of Louis-Philippe left him indifferent: "A la campagne, on ne s'inquiète guère d'habitude des affaires du gouvernement. Que ce soit Pierre ou Paul qui soit en tête, on n'en a pas moins à faire, aux mêmes époques, les memes besognes." [1] When agricultural concerns are involved, however, the peasant discards his indifference and acts to defend what he sees as his immediate interests. With the introduction of universal male suffrage in the wake of the 1848 revolution, Tiennon casts his vote for the republican candidates---and against the rural-based conservatives---because they advocate the abolition of the tax on salt. In a seemingly contradictory sequel, explicable however in terms of his preoccupation with the welfare of the land, Tiennon votes with the rural bloc ("tous les personnages influents, les propriétaires, les régisseurs, les gros fermiers, les curés") in the plebiscite on the Head of State. Although this forced an alliance with some of those who were his immediate enemies, he was sufficiently far-sighted to fear that the Opposition would consistently sacrifice the interests of the farmers to those of the urban workers. As the narrative progresses, echoes of other developments originating outside the rural community are discernible. This is particularly true of the educational reforms which bear fruit in the person of Tiennon's grandson who becomes the first member of the family group to be able to read and write. Towards the end, technological developments gradually invade the tradition-bound world of the peasant and

1. La Vie d'un simple, p.120.

his reaction to them, although often picturesque in its naïveté, betrays a certain dignity in its resignation. Upon hearing a neighbour complaining about the locomotives terrifying his livestock, Tiennon reflects that, "Ah! on avait bien tort de se plaindre du chemin de fer; le chemin de fer a sa route à lui et ne passe qu'à certaines heures; avec de la prudence, on peut l'éviter. Mais ces automobiles sont vraiment les instruments du diable, envahissant nos routes, passant n'importe quand et nous faisant du mal." He adds, however, that, "J'ai dit cela sur le coup; mais après j'ai pensé que je n'avais pas à me mettre en peine de ces choses. Homme d'une autre époque, aïeul à tête branlante, ce n'est pas moi d'émettre une opinion là-dessus." [1].

Although he did not ignore the parochial aspects of the peasant mentality, many of which he regarded as obstacles to social progress, it was by insisting on the more rational, and universal, side to the worker that Guillaumin escaped being a writer of merely regional interest. In order to present the 'essential' nature of the peasant it was necessary for a certain convention to be agreed by both the reader and author. This involved above all accepting Tiennon as both a 'type'---uncultured, taciturn and cynical---and an eloquent spokesman for his class. He is a rational creature who, like the author, thinks and draws conclusions and lessons from the events in his life. He cannot be, if the narrative is to succeed---and on the whole it does succeed---either unobservant of his surroundings or passive in the face of circumstance, content to suffer without comment or resistance. The success of

1. La Vie d'un simple, p.312.

Guillaumin's response to this compromise lies in the elimination in his style of literary affectations foreign to the essentially fruste nature of his peasant subject, and a reliance on aphorism and concrete image by which the simple character approaches self-expression.

"[...] La langue du peuple", wrote S.G. Butler with reference to Maupassant's stylistic compromise," quelque savoureuse qu'elle soit, ne suffit pas à compenser l'absence du style individuel d'un écrivain." [1]. After Dialogues bourbonnais, Guillaumin had abandoned extensive use of patois, and the language here possesses a classical clarity which does not, however, seriously challenge the credibility of the hero's background. [2]. Although he does not always avoid the temptation to be consciously 'literary' ("[...] La brise caressante comme une femme amoureuse apportait avec elle des senteurs de lointain, des arômes d'infini, des souffles sains dispensateurs de robustesse [...]") most of the observations made are marked with a common sense and dry humour compatible with their source. "Il n'est pas d'hommes tellement supérieurs", muses Tiennon, "qu'ils ne soient à l'abri de la qualification „d'imbéciles„ que leur appliquent d'autres hommes plus supérieurs encore. Il y a là de quoi consoler ceux qui ne sont pas supérieurs du tout." [3]. Some observations, indeed,

1. S.G. Butler, Les Parlers dialectaux et populaires dans l'oeuvre de Guy de Maupassant, Geneva/Paris 1962, p.183.

2. On one occasion Guillaumin does make explicit use of dialect and provides the reader with an insight into some of the peculiarities of pronunciation in the Bourbonnais towards the end of the last century. Tiennon's son, Charles, having returned home from the war with Prussia, makes fun of the dialect used by his family. The specific examples given include "ol" (il), "nout" (notre), "soué" (lui), "voué" (c'est), "bounne" (bonne), "souère" (soif), "adrel" (adroit), and "ch'tit" (chétif). (p.230.)

3. La Vie d'un simple, p.135.

are truly Proustian in their awareness of the complexity of human thought and emotion, yet do not abandon the dépouillé tone which sustains by far the greatest part of the narrative: "Le passé est un gouffre où s'accumulent sans relâche nos sensations de l'heure présente; les dernières ensevelies recouvrent d'une couche sans cesse plus épaisse les autres, qui finissent par ne plus former qu'un amas informe où il est dangereux de remuer et difficile de retrouver quelque chose de net." [1].

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1. La Vie d'un simple, p.287.

Près du sol and Rose et sa Parisienne.

The four novels which appeared in the interval between La Vie d'un simple and the publication of Le Syndicat de Baugignoux in 1912 did little to further Guillaumin's reputation. They were in the main mere elaboration on certain themes already presented in La Vie and deserved the indifference most critics displayed towards them. Près du sol (1906) and Rose et sa Parisienne (1907) remained faithful to the peasant cadre established in Guillaumin's first novel, while the scope of Albert Manceau, adjudant (1906) and Baptiste et sa femme (1911) was extended to explore two of the author's favourite themes: the double threat to the peasantry posed by the military and the lure of urban life.

Despite his antipathy towards the large landowners, Guillaumin was not above accepting bourgeois assistance when it was a question of seeing his novels published. In a letter to Stock (6 May 1904), he mentioned "un très gros propriétaire foncier de la région, M.Thuret", who had admired La Vie d'un simple and offered to present Guillaumin's second novel to Ganderax, editor of La Revue de Paris. [1.] Guillaumin accepted ---as did Ganderax---and Près du sol appeared serially (1 and 15 October, 1 and 15 November) in the Autumn of 1905 in the review which fifty years earlier had published Madame Bovary. It was issued in book form by Calmann-Lévy in February of the following year. [2.] There were no further editions of Près du sol, although it appeared en feuilletons in Le Peuple (March, April and May 1926). After the financial success of La Vie

1. See P.-V.Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, p.235.

2. It is from this 1906 edition that all textual references are taken.

d'un simple, Stock was angered that Guillaumin had placed his new novel with another publisher. "Car à tort ou à raison", he wrote in his Mémorandum d'un éditeur, "je pensais éditer ce roman, j'y comptais même [...] Dès lors j'ai résolu de ne plus rien publier de Guillaumin et nos relations devinrent strictement des relations d'affaires concernant uniquement La Vie d'un simple" (p.255). In fact, no new work by Guillaumin was edited by Stock until the posthumous publication of Paysans par eux-mêmes in 1953.

Preliminary sketches for the novel had been made during 1899-1900, the same period in which Guillaumin was working on Tableaux champêtres. The project was set aside, however, in Spring 1901 when he read Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant and was inspired to produce the epic account of his own Bourbonnais peasantry which eventually became La Vie d'un simple. The reasons for the postponement become apparent when the two novels are compared. Près du sol was much less ambitious in its conception, attempting neither the thematic nor the temporal scope of its predecessor. Instead of the panorama of peasant existence provided by La Vie, Près du sol is the account of a particular ---and atypical---peasant family viewed across a period of four or five years.

Unlike La Vie, this novel is dependent upon a plot. Central to the action is Maria Vaureil, a fourteen-year-old girl who at the beginning of the work has just returned from a convent school. Her parents, Louis and Clémence, are prosperous paysans propriétaires, readily distinguishable from the majority of their neighbours and the impoverished métayers of La Vie d'un simple. The plot progression is simple and hinges on the alienating effect that Maria's education has had on her. Her

father had sent her to the nuns "par orgueil [...] en songeant qu'après deux années de pension sa fille pourrait, le dimanche, fréquenter [...] toutes les dames „très bien„". [1] Although the father's vanity does not extend to making a bourgeoise of his only child ("[...] A la maison, il exigeait qu'elle s'habituât à toutes les besognes"), Maria necessarily feels repugnance for her daily farm chores, and is aware of a growing social barrier separating her from former friends. It is impossible not to suspect a direct borrowing from Madame Bovary in Guillaumin's presentation of Maria's formative years. Her idealism, nurtured in the rarefied atmosphere of the convent and encouraged by secret readings of Paul et Virginie and other Romantic novels, leaves her with the image of a future husband which seems unreasonably optimistic given her rustic surroundings: "[...] Elle le voudrait tranquille et réservé, avec de l'intelligence et du coeur, un peu de savoir-vivre, une certaine délicatesse de sentiments." [2] She comes closest to finding what she wants in Paul Bougin, the local schoolmaster, who shares her high-mindedness ("[...] Le mariage ne doit pas être l'association d'un maître et d'une esclave, mais de deux égaux [...] Je suis féministe."). Neither he, however, nor the impoverished Jacques Lacroix, who is devoted to the girl, is acceptable to the father. He hopes to marry Maria to Jean Peyrat, the physically and morally repugnant son of a wealthy métayer. Not wanting to cause "le malheur de mes parents", Maria eventually succumbs to the pressure put on her and agrees to marry Jean even though she knows that he has recently made

1. Près du sol, Paris 1906, p.28.

2. Ibid., p.154.

her best friend pregnant. Her sensibilities are never reconciled to the prospect, however, and one morning, while washing the family linen, she throws herself into the river and drowns.

The melodramatic climax to Près du sol seems reminiscent of certain scenes in Le Père Perdrix and Croquignole, and this is precisely what Charles-Louis Philippe found most attractive about his friend's novel. As soon as Près du sol had been published Guillaumin sent a copy to Philippe. Shortly afterwards the author received a letter assuring him that the work contained "[...] des choses tout à fait supérieures comme le retour de la fille enceinte, le suicide." [1]. Although predisposed to be indulgent ("Ce que j'ai trouvé bien, je suis sûr que c'est bien, le reste je le trouverai peut-être très bien à la seconde lecture"), he agreed with Stock's conclusion that Près du sol was inferior to La Vie. In particular he faulted what he saw here as a tendency in Guillaumin to be pedantic: "Il m'a semblé qu'il y avait quelques longueurs, trop d'insistance dans les descriptions et dans certains discours [...]" [2].

The novel received favourable notice in the Mercure de France from Rachilde. She did, however, object to the use of the journal 'device' towards the end of the work. Maria's

1. See Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.285. "Une seule fois dans sa carrière de romancier, Guillaumin fait mourir tragiquement son personnage principal. Il semble confus, gêné d'être réduit à un procédé si tapageusement romanesque et s'embourbe---un peu---dans les pistes fangeuses du mélo."

2. Part of this letter is reproduced in Guillaumin's Mon Compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, p.137. Although not dated, it was probably written in March 1906.

diary, to which Guillaumin devoted twenty pages, was included to add another dimension to the third person narrative by recording the girl's reflections on her increasing isolation and by following the psychological processes by which she arrives at the decision to marry Peyrat. Rachilde somewhat arbitrarily considered the diary's passionate eloquence out of place in a work about peasants, and regretted its effect upon an otherwise credible treatment of the subject: "Ce récit, tout nuancé de jolis détails, ne me semble déparé que par le journal de la fin. Une fillette de ce rang social n'a jamais l'idée d'écrire son journal, même au sortir de Sainte-Anastasie, école religieuse." [1] Other critics appeared less difficult to please. Impervious to both the uninspiring didacticism of some passages which annoyed Philippe and the épanchements of the diary which appeared unseemly to Mme Vallette, M.-C.Poinsot applauded the success with which Guillaumin moulded style to subject:

> Son style échappe à l'enthousiasme. Nulle recherche de mots [...] Il écrit comme on parle, ce qui est enseigné dans les écoles primaires. Voilà pourquoi, je pense, il intéresse quelques écrivains las de l'écriture, quelques artistes las de l'effort d'art, et qui l'ont patronné. [2]

In the only major recent study of Guillaumin, Roger Mathé adopts a patronising approach similar to that of Rachilde when assessing Près du sol. If the earlier critic had taken for granted that a peasant girl was incapable of recording her intimate thoughts, Mathé found Maria's suicide inconceivable. Presumably despair was not within the range of peasant

1. Mercure de France, 1 March 1906, p.106.
2. La Grande Revue, 1 April 1906, pp.107-108.

experience either, and it was Maria's surrender to this alien emotion that for Mathé destroyed the novel's credibility. "Un drame à la métairie? Comment faire admettre ce recours héroïque à la mort dans ce milieu de paysans, sans idéal, sans pudeur, agrippés à leur champ, et à leurs gros sabots? Conter un suicide romantique [...] quelle dissonance!" [1]. This discrepancy, however, between the romantic nature of the girl's act and the banality of life around her need not be considered a fatal weakness. The melodrama of the suicide does, granted, appear unnecessary, as Maria's 'otherness' has already been adequately established. One may argue that the conclusion of the novel would have been much more satisfying had the girl been left in the final humiliation of her surrender to the repellent Jean Peyrat. It remains, however, that the "dissonance" regretted by Mathé is rather a confirmation---albeit exaggerated---of the well documented estrangement of Maria from family and friends. This "dissonance", furthermore, has everything to do with Guillaumin's design for the novel.

Nowhere in his work does the author's priority to reform the peasantry produce a less veiled attack on them. It is difficult not to see in the principal character Guillaumin's acknowledgement of his own position as a relatively cultured peasant increasingly frustrated by the ignorance and insularity of his fellows. Although he had long been a champion of popular education, he saw it as practical in nature and desirable insofar as it advanced the moral and physical wellbeing of the worker. He supported it as a means to reinforce---and not

1. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, Paris 1966, p.284.

undermine---the viability of the rural community. Respecting the obvious transposition of circumstances, there must surely be an element of irony directed against himself in the portrait of the peasant girl polluted by middle class manners. Her years at the convent have inculcated none of the practical knowledge required for the successful management of a peasant household, but rather emphasised the finer arts---singing, the playing of musical instruments and the study of literature---which encourage introspection. Although she never turns her hand to writing novels about her peasant milieu, the girl has taken the necessary first step backwards to gain a different, if not objective, view of her environment. "Maria s'affinait; les nécessités de la culture cessaient de lui paraître naturelles." [1] We have already noted to what extent Guillaumin was alive to the rift between himself and his fellows created by his intellectual pursuits. That his peasant neighbours were also sensitive to the 'outsider' in their midst will be made clear when we examine their hostile reaction to Rose et sa Parisienne.

If Maria's case is atypical, Guillaumin proceeds elsewhere in the novel to dissect what he sees as a representative cross section of the peasant community under the guise of three distinct characters. Louis Vaureil seems a magnification of the peasant stereotype. Clever, extremely hardworking and thrifty, he has provided his family with the independence assured by the ownership of one's own land, and a reliable, if hearty, level of existence. Nowhere better does Guillaumin convey the essence of the man's nature than by reflecting it

1. Près du sol, p.29.

in the utilitarian aspect of the family dwelling. "Cette vieille maison n'était en somme que la hutte primitive plus solidement construite, l'indispensable abri contre les intempéries, le refuge pour la préparation des repas et pour le sommeil des nuits; et les objets usuels, les objets d'une incontestable utilité pratique, seuls y trouvaient place." [1].

To the extent that his success is the result of effort, Louis appears justified in his periodic exercises in self-approbation. "[...] Je suis sûr qu'il y a bien des bourgeois qui ne sont pas aussi heureux que moi. Je suis mon maître, je cultive ma propriété comme je l'entends, et j'ai de l'argent pour faire mes affaires." [2]. It becomes clear, however, that he is ambitious to a fault and, far from representing Guillaumin's ideal of class cohesion, amasses his fortune by exploiting family and neighbours. In all matters political he collaborates with the local châtelain, M.Breuron and in the marketplace the conventional paysan rusé is in him exposed as little better than a confidence man thriving on those weaker than himself. He distorts the peasant virtue of thrift, and on more than one occasion his greed is seen to cause the suffering of his wife and child. Unwilling to hire labourers, for example, he uses Clémence and Maria in the fields. Describing one incident in which the family attempts to unload a cartful of hay before the break of an approaching storm, Guillaumin shows Louis, oblivious to everything else, working himself into a frenzy to accomplish the task. "Tout à la

1. Près du sol, p.14.
2. Ibid., p.109.

fièvre du travail, harcelé par les grondements précurseurs de l'orage, Vaureil ne se rendait pas compte de la peine qu'avaient en haut sa femme et sa fille. Il s'interrompit une minute, déclara de bonne foi qu'il faisait les fourchées petites et gémit sur la faiblesse des femmes." [1]. Readers of the "Fenaisons" chapter of his earlier Tableaux champêtres will recall both Guillaumin's extended description of the effort demanded by this sort of labour and his appeal that, "Cela ne devrait être qu'un travail d'hommes robustes. Il est cruel d'y voir employer des vieillards, des enfants, des femmes!" [2].

Above all, Louis epitomises a vice found to be latent in all reaches of the rural community and the one which the author considered most harmful to the ideal of entr'aide in a unified proletariat. Vaureil is a snob and the social distinctions he makes, and which are accepted it seems by everyone except Maria, are as nice as those thriving in the Parisian beau monde. The countryside portrayed is one riddled with social ambition, where the humblest journalier never relinquishes the hope of one day becoming a métayer or even attaining Vaureil's status of paysan propriétaire. Stratification within the rural working class is evident everywhere, even regulating which of the town balls Maria is allowed to attend. When the mother forbids certain gatherings for fear her daughter might develop a taste for "plaisirs vulgaires et contacts douteux", Vaureil confirms the prohibition, "[...] disant qu'elle était d'une situation trop élevée pour fréquenter

1. Près du sol, p.105.

2. Tableaux champêtres, Crépin-Leblond, Moulins 1931, p.68.

ces bals où n'allaient que des filles très pauvres, servantes ou métayères." [1] When Maria confesses that she has received a declaration of love from the son of their penniless neighbour, her father's indignation is entirely predictable:

> ---Ah! c'est lui!... Eh bien! il ne manque pas de toupet, ce gamin-là!... Un domestique!... Le fils d'un journalier et d'une laveuse de lessives! non, c'est fort!... [2]

In juxtaposition to the conservatism of a man like Vaureil who maintains "[...] qu'il y a eu, de tout temps, des riches et des pauvres, et qu'il y en aurait toujours, qu'on ne pourrait changer cela" (p.40) is his neighbour Pinel, a révolté who is convinced that "[...] la misère d'un pays est en proportion du nombre de châteaux qu'il possède" (p.40). If any direct line of influence is to be drawn from Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant to this novel, it is here in the character of Pinel that it is found. Although he refrains from actually setting light to the bourgeois country houses, his unqualified hatred of the landed exploiters is a product of the same mould which cast Jacquou in his incendiary career. The third peasant type, Vaureil's impoverished neighbour Lacroix, bears a more than passing resemblance to the hero of Philippe's Le Père Perdrix published three years earlier. Like the protagonist in Philippe's work, Lacroix atrophies in his resignation to what he regards as inescapable suffering: "C'était un fataliste aigri par la souffrance, et tous les sentiments spontanés semblaient morts chez lui. Nulle peine, nul déboire, nulle catastrophe ne pouvaient changer l'expression d'indifférence de son visage ascétique [...]" [3].

1. Près du sol, p.113.
2. Ibid., p.168.
3. Ibid., p.44.

Having exposed three faces at least of the peasant nature, Guillaumin makes little attempt to add credibility to his characters by drawing them together in a sustained narrative. They are three adequately executed cameos with little relevance to what happens in the rest of the book. There is almost nothing to sustain this 325-page novel and Philippe was justified in regretting certain "longueurs" as his friend lingered unduly over his several character sketches. Undoubtedly, the work's weakest feature---and one detected, if for the wrong reasons, by Rachilde---is the pre-eminence given to the figure of Maria. She lays claim to by far the greatest share of the narrator's attention with the result that the style is coloured by precious tones of pathos and innocence elsewhere unknown in Guillaumin's writing. The plot, consisting of an irregular series of anecdotes which document the girl's growing alienation from her surroundings and her final suicide, is not substantial enough to merit the reader's undivided attention. Even much of the dubious attraction of melodrama is denied the novel in the account of Maria's death. In a scene reminiscent of Perdrix's drowning, Maria's decision to throw herself into the water is reached so suddenly that the reader is taken as much by surprise as the girl herself. "Et tout à coup, sans réflexion nouvelle, dans un accès subit de volonté presque irraisonnée, elle donna des genoux une brusque secousse qui fit culbuter dans la mare la caisse de bois et à la suite du „cabas„, elle s'enfonça, tête première, dans la transparence de l'eau." [1]

Emphasis is diverted by default to the characterisation of Maria who proves a most inappropriate vehicle for the

1. Près du sol, p.305.

author. To her attaches, as the only possible explanation for her predicament, a weight of fatality alien to Guillaumin's general philosophical formation.

> [...] Il lui vint une idée philosophique: „Nous avançons dans la vie, ignorants, chaque jour, de ce que sera l'étape du lendemain. Nous allons comme la goutte d'eau que l'inévitable courant entraîne vers la rivière, vers le fleuve et vers la mer. Nous sommes roulés inconsciemment par le courant des jours, qu'on ne peut ni remonter, ni descendre plus vite„ [1].

Of a similar vein are her reflections upon reading Alphonse Daudet's Jack: "C'est bien vrai, songeait-elle, qu'il y a des êtres sur qui la fatalité semble s'acharner; du jour même de leur naissance ils sont des parias, et la vie n'est pour eux qu'un martyre continuel." [2]. However much in keeping such sentiments may appear with an adolescent girl coerced into marrying against her ideals, this is hardly the stuff of which 'peasant' novels are made. The worker has as little time to ruminate on the power of fate in his life as he does to pause and consider the beauty of nature surrounding him in the fields. If the reader---worker or bourgeois---is incapable of seeing Maria as even a highly stylised representation of the peasant character, he is ready to accept her story as the author presumably intended it; that is, as the interior drama of a young girl deceived by her education into expecting too much from life. The first-person immediacy in Maria's journal which appears at the end of the novel amplifies the discordance between the realism of the peasant setting and the psychological drama being acted out. "De plus en plus", confesses the girl, "je me persuade que ma destinée a été réglée dans un sens

1. Près du sol, p.155.

2. Ibid., p.185.

malheureux au grand livre de là-haut et que je n'échapperai pas à mon destin." [1]. One wonders why Rachilde objected to such passages as being beyond the capabilities of a romantically inclined young girl shut away in a convent school. Quite the contrary, they seem---as far as one can judge---entirely appropriate for a sixteen-year-old. What is much more difficult to understand is why Guillaumin should interrupt a series of novels dealing with different aspects of the peasant problem with a psychological drama à la Bovary where the heroine, educated above her station, is placed in fatal conflict with her environment.

If Guillaumin's most incisive attack on the peasant mentality was launched through the characterisation of Louis Vaureil, the novel does not pass entirely without more general reference to the condition of the rural worker. Religion, for example, is regarded as a means of social control, with the peasants seeking in the pomp of the Church respite from their monotonous existences and the gentry feigning piety "pour monter le bon exemple". Guillaumin, like Philippe, is also alive to the ambiguity inherent in the necessity for manual labour. If, on the one hand, it possesses a Rousseauesque virtue as an antidote to the degenerate preoccupation with luxury induced by urban living, it is also presented as the enemy of physical and, by implication, moral wellbeing. Vaureil's prosperity is exceptional and due in any event, as we have noted, as much to his willingness to exploit others as to his own industry. More apposite is the juxtaposition of faces that Maria notices in the marketplace revealing the rapid transition to old

1. Près du sol, p.285.

age which characterised the life of the peasant: "Il y avait, sous de rares capulets aux couleurs tendres, quelques frais visages de fillettes et de jeunes filles accompagnant leurs mères. A part cela, c'étaient de pauvres faces ravagées, stigmatisées par les misères quotidiennes d'une vie laborieuse, monotone et déjà longue." [1].

Written during the Winter of 1906-1907, Rose et sa Parisienne was published by Calmann-Lévy in November 1907 and a second edition appeared the following year. [2]. It is Guillaumin's least impressive work, lacking a sustained narrative voice and consisting of a series of loosely coordinated anecdotes whose sole purpose is to provide a vehicle for an attack on rural society. The setting is the village of Vouzances, a thinly disguised Ygrande, and the characters those who inhabit it and the surrounding countryside. The work is essentially a psychological étude de moeurs concentrating on the interaction of the rural bourgeoisie and the peasant classes. No sustained plot exists, and the novel takes its title from one of the more important anecdotes in which Rose, a middle-aged and deformed spinster, agrees to foster a young Parisian girl from the Assistance Publique. Guillaumin makes a half-hearted attempt to sustain a plot in the romantic link between the "Parisienne" and Lucien Page, the son of the local roadmender, but abandons this preferring to isolate the various reactions of the local community to the stranger in their midst.

1. Près du sol, p.71.
2. All references to the text are taken from the 1907 edition. The novel appeared serially in Le Peuple (August 1928) and edited en volume by Les Editions des Cahiers Bourbonnais, Moulins, 1970.

Understandably, Rose et sa Parisienne attracted very little critical notice beyond the barest mention of its publication. Even those close to the author appeared reticent to encourage his efforts in creating a tableau intérieur of the rural community. The noticeable exception was Charles-Louis Philippe whose affection for Guillaumin apparently moved him to excuse much. Although his public reaction to Rose was suspiciously sparse, in a letter to Guillaumin a month after the book was published he claimed that, "C'est un livre excellent, le digne frère de La Vie d'un simple. Quelles belles qualités d'humanité il y a là; comme tout est vrai sagement, lentement, simplement. Je retrouve là cet amour du détail qui, dans vos livre précédents, m'avait parfois semblé excessifs, mais qui ici ajoute au récit et lui donne un caractère de vérité dont j'ai été constamment ému et charmé." [1]. In the Mercure de France Rachilde gave it short, but favourable, notice: "Un roman sans aucune intrigue. Intéressant quand même pour la probité de son étude de moeurs [...] C'est consciencieux et bien fait." [2].

Writing in La Revue bleue, Lucien Maury isolated one general characteristic of Guillaumin's writing particularly noticeable in this novel. Unlike many later peasant writers who, with the regionalists, embellished their work with descriptions of a particular province and accounts of its folklore, Guillaumin did not impose his native Bourbonnais onto his writing. Despite the lyrical evocation of the

1. Letter of December 1907, Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.68n., also quoted in Emile Guillaumin, Mon Compatriote, Charles-Louis Philippe, pp.165-166.
2. Mercure de France, 16 January 1908, p.297.

countryside in the early Tableaux champêtres, he grew to consider such parochialism an obstacle to his efforts to educate and unite the agricultural working class. In Maury's view, this unwillingness to make use of either the historical or physical attractions of the Bourbonnais resulted in a 'clinical' treatment of the rural subject by an indifferent author. "Sa terre de Bourbonnais, à peine sait-on s'il l'aime; les morts, il les ignore; les vivants, c'est eux seuls qu'il observe, ce sont leurs préoccupations, leurs labeurs, le train-train de leur existence qu'il s'efforce de surprendre." [1]. Just as Ernest-Charles saw in Baptiste et sa femme the "procès-verbal d'une existence triste", [2]. Maury detected in Rose the worst aspects of a Realist's attempt to explain character in terms of visual reality and transcribed dialogue. If the highly selective style of a Balzac or a Flaubert could make this technique work to advantage, Guillaumin's sense of the relevant was less sure. While admitting that after the excesses of Naturalism a jaded public were "avides de santé, d'air pur, d'émotions simples et vraies", Maury added that, "[...] Emile Guillaumin exagère; Emile Guillaumin ne redoute point la platitude; il s'y embourbe; oui, nous aimons les champs, nous sommes infiniment curieux de la vie, des gestes, des paroles de nos frères laboureurs, [...] ce n'est point une raison pour nous infliger des pages et des pages de bavardages sténographiés." [3].

A more recent critic, Roger Mathé, took a step further the implications of Guillaumin's self-imposed distance from

1. La Revue bleue, 29 February 1908, p.282.
2. La Grande Revue, 25 March 1911, p.402.
3. La Revue bleue, 29 February 1908, p.284.

his native Bourbonnais. He identified a shift in emphasis between Près du sol and Rose et sa Parisienne, suggesting an increased tendency to abandon physical description in favour of a more abstract examination of peasant psychology. [1.] The apparent immobility of the narrative, which Philippe also detected, seemed to Mathé desirable insofar as it reflected the relative simplicity of the rural characters involved and allowed the author to dwell on the psychological minutiae in their response to the demands of everyday living: "Ici, les images présentent des âmes et des gestes si lents qu'on a l'illusion de l'immobilité. Guillaumin feuillette devant nous l'album où il a recueilli ses photographies [...]" [2.]

As the series of episodes which constitutes Rose follows no consistent pattern like that established in La Vie d'un simple by the 'natural' rhythm of the changing seasons, it will serve little purpose to attempt a chronological evaluation of this novel. What can be done is to isolate the several thematic emphases which either were absent in the earlier novels or played less conspicuous roles. Rose is unique among Guillaumin's work in that here alone, in the village of Vouzances, are both sides in the social conflict represented in significant numbers and held in sustained juxtaposition. That the picture of the rural bourgeoisie which emerges is unsympathetic does not surprise. What is more significant is the rough justice meted out to the labourers---further indication of the author's aim to educate the workers by holding up to them their shortcomings. Far from using the

1. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.290.

2. Ibid., p.328.

confrontation of the classes, inevitable in a small rural community, to enhance the poverty-stricken at the expense of the capitalists, the workers condemn themselves by being seen to emulate the behaviour of their social superiors. They adopt purely materialistic priorities as their own and await the opportunity to escape from their class into the security of the bourgeoisie. No sense of cohesion exists among the labourers, and the snobbery and social pretension particularised in the Louis Vaureil of Près du sol are seen as latent characteristics of a whole class in Rose.

From the outset Guillaumin makes it clear that the psychology he is trying to expose is a collective rural one and not restricted to a particular sector of the population. Aphorisms and generalisations abound, each one reinforcing the bond between the social strata. It was the conservatism of the rural mentality which continually thwarted the author's attempts to organise agricultural labour in the Bourbonnais, and this resistance to change bears the brunt of the ironical edge in Rose: "Autant il est difficile, à la compagne, d'introduire une nouveauté, autant il est inutile de batailler contre ce qui est admis." [1] The social canvas is painted with broad generalisation to convey the impression of comprehensive treatment of the milieu. The strokes are too broad, however, to admit much particular character development and Rose is peopled with caricatures whose principal purpose is to illustrate a sociological pattern already constructed by the author:

> Les paysans, traditionalistes par essence, allaient à la messe, étaient soumis aux bourgeois et votaient pour eux. Les artisans habitant tous l'agglomération, souvent réunis, causant et lisant davantage,

1. Rose et sa Parisienne, Paris 1907, p.5.

> étaient irreligieux et républicains. Les terriens les considéraient comme des „têtes brûlées„ ; eux considéraient les terriens comme des imbéciles. [1].

It is primarily through their common allegiance to the authority of the Church that the middle class and the peasants are visibly united in their unholy alliance. The instinct for self-preservation and legitimacy on the one hand and the need of refuge and consolation on the other presented the rural clergy with something approaching absolute power to influence local affairs. The sustained anti-clerical satire helps bind together the disparate elements of the novel and makes it unique among the author's works. We have seen that Guillaumin was an enthusiastic reader of Eugène Le Roy and it is probable that the virulent anti-clericalism of Jacquou le croquant and Les Gens d'Auberoque influenced that which emerges in Rose. Neither the interiorised narrative of La Vie d'un simple nor the tale of domestic friction in Près du sol was suitable to develop this theme. An enclosed yet heterogeneous society such as Vouzances and its environs provided, however, gave Guillaumin the opportunity to expose in microcosm what he considered the Church's sinister influence on the rural community. A conventional attack on the greed and wealth of the Church is made through the character of Soeur Ursule, pharmacienne at the local convent, whose principal recreation is devising means to extort money from peasant families. She also appears as the antithesis to Christian charity, advising Rose not to foster an orphan since "[...] on ne connaît pas l'origine de ces petits...ou plutôt on ne la connaît que trop [...] Ils peuvent avoir hérité de leurs parents de vilaines

1. Rose et sa Parisienne, p.21.

maladies, ce qui n'est guère engageant...Et leur âme est certainement un abîme de perversité morale." [1].

In Guillaumin's view, however, the worst effects of religion on the lower classes result from the psychological hold it has on them. Although Rose's piety is forgiven as a refuge from her poverty and deformity ("Elle allait dans les recoins de la chapelle [...] où il fait bon s'anéantir dans le rêve mystique de la soumission et de l'espoir") what is attacked is the peasants' uncritical acquiescence to social divisions condoned by the clergy. The Church aligns herself closely with the conservative bloc, and even at Holy Communion the social hierarchy is seen to be preserved as the people dutifully take their appointed places in the queue to the altar rail; nuns first followed by the rest of the populace in order of wealth and social importance.

Opposition is rare but, when it occurs, spectacular. The insults of Mme Colarde and Mme Page, Rose's peasant neighbours, on their encounter with the village priest during a walk in the countryside vie in disrespect with those often put in the mouths of Zola's characters:

> ---Il n'a presque plus de cheveux sur le caillou! dit Mme Colarde, quand il se fut éloigné.
> ---Mais, en revanche, il a des taches noires tout plein la figure et un grand nez crochu qui me déplaît, objecta la Page. Il a une tête antipathique, on ne peut pas dire le contraire. [2].

Majority acceptance of Church authority such as that suggested in Rose was not the norm in turn of the century France and certainly Guillaumin's Bourbonnais was in danger of becoming one of those 'dechristianised' zones which worried the

1. Rose et sa Parisienne, p.161.

2. Ibid., p.104.

contemporary Hierarchy. The attitude of Mmes Colarde and Page was closer to popular conviction and it is likely that even the near blasphemies of a young worker at the local corn mill struck a sympathetic chord in sections of the population:

> ---Fallait garder le corbeau avec vous, les femmes; vous avez bien, sans doute, besoin de vous confesser [...] Il est vrai qu'il aime mieux recevoir les péchés des jeunes filles de dix-huit ans [...] Moi, je n'aime pas à rencontrer ces oiseaux de mauvais augure. 1.

Exaggeration of wholesale obedience was deliberate and Vouzances society was intended as a caricature to heighten the workers' awareness of the dangers in submitting to any authority other than that dictated by the welfare of their own class. In particular Guillaumin is parodying the drift towards a passive acceptance of the status quo encouraged by the Church's emphasis on the importance of the next life at the expense of this one. In a novel so concerned with the power of religion it is not inconsistent to find that the concept of fatality plays a role more in keeping with the importance given it in Philippe's works than in the novels by Guillaumin. It is through Rose, the closest approximation to a central character here, that the philosophical point is most specifically made:

> Elle sait qu'il y a dans la vie des forts et des faibles et qu'elle fait partie des derniers. Les bourgeois, les juges, les gendarmes se rangent parmi les premiers; et quand leurs rudes mains s'abattent sur les faibles, il en cuit à ces malheureux. Elle ne se permet pas de trouver cela injuste, elle constate seulement que c'est bien triste. 2.

1. Rose et sa Parisienne, p.104.

2. Ibid., p.221.

Although to a great extent the reader's sympathy for Rose is a product of her wretched physical and material condition, debility is clearly associated with her tendency to fatalism and the parody neatly established.

If Roger Mathé appreciated what he regarded as the psychological insights into peasant character glimpsed through documenting external mannerisms and habits, Rose taken at its most superficial level provoked a violent response in less literary circles. As we have already seen in our study of La Vie d'un simple and Près du sol Guillaumin's style owed much to the legacy of nineteenth century realism and naturalism. The imperative to record detail is so strong in Rose that it retards the action to the point where any traditional concept of plot is destroyed. What emerges is a series of minutely worked set pieces with varying amount of connecting material which justifies Charles-Louis Philippe's reservations about the slow pace of this novel. When the narrative eye dwells upon people rather than environment the transposition of real life model to fictional character is immediate, and it provoked an outcry among those elements of Ygrandais society who believed they recognised themselves. Guillaumin's favourite technique is to provide miniature portraits excluding everything but the essence of a character; a dangerous method when creative imagination plays too small a part and when the author establishes too clearly his sources. Occasionally he does not even bother to change his models' names. While introducing the reader to Vouzances, Guillaumin identifies five specific individuals by occupation: the innkeeper, grocer, cobbler, clogmaker and clarinet player. When this exposition is pursued

the following description emerges:

> Tureaud, beau parleur, ayant toujours à la bouche les mots de „République„, de „liberté„, de „fraternité„, vendait du vin pitoyable. Bard se saoulait souvent et, trivial, tenait aux femmes des propos obscènes; le gros André était placide et quelconque; Vignal, un gringalet aux longs cheveux mal peignés, s'affichait, criard, insolent même; enfin Joyon avait la réputation méritée d'un joyeux „fumiste„, dont les boutades et les chansons comiques émoustillaient les tablées aux repas de noces, mais on se refusait à le prendre au sérieux. [1]

When the novel was published, those townspeople in Ygrande who thought themselves compromised started a campaign against Guillaumin in the local press. His socialist sympathies and anti-clericalism as expressed in Le Travailleur rural had long irritated the bourgeoisie, and even those not directly implicated closed ranks against him. A certain Madame M. and her daughter threatened to kill him "à coups de fusil" because, they claimed, the fictional Mme Beroux and daughter Mathilde made them appear both avaricious in their dealing with their tenants and tedious: "Elles vont [...] quelquefois l'hiver passer la veillée chez leurs locataires, parce que leur fourneau de cuisine chauffe moins que le poêle des locataires, et puis aussi parce qu'elles s'endorment lorsqu'elles ne sont que toutes les deux, leur conversation, faute d'aliments, étant à peu près nulle." [2] Resentment became so keen that Guillaumin for a while considered moving away from the area altogether. In a letter to Daniel Halévy written in February 1908 he regretted his lack of tact, conceding that he might have carried too far his insistence on vérité: "J'ai peut-être eu le tort de marquer de traits un peu trop précis deux ou trois

1. Rose et sa Parisienne, pp.23-24.
2. Ibid., p.67.

personnages---Mme Beroux et sa fille, surtout---et d'utiliser quelques menus faits d'histoire locale." [1].

If indiscriminate and excessive description, even when highly ironic, fatally disrupts the flow of the narrative, many of these descriptions are useful in establishing the link binding Guillaumin and the naturalists of a generation earlier. The manner in which Rose herself, reminiscent of the blind beggar in Madame Bovary, is introduced into the narrative is indicative of this aspect of Guillaumin's style:

> La Rose est une vieille fille d'une quarantaine d'années, toute petite, toute menue, un peu boiteuse et très laide. Au cours de son enfance chétive, elle a eu des convulsions qui lui ont laissé une figure crispée et tournée vers la gauche, une bouche de guingois et l'oeil droit tellement tiré que la paupière ne bat plus, qu'il montre tout son blanc et vous regarde avec une fixité glaciale; c'est de ce côté gauche aussi qu'elle tangue fortement en marchant, à cause de la hanche anormale. [2].

What tenuous cohesion exists between the various tableaux is seriously disrupted at the beginning of Chapter 12 where Guillaumin permits not only a jump of thirteen years in the chronology but also a change of viewpoint from that of the omniscient narrator to one particular character, Lucien Page. Lucien returns to Vouzances after unpleasant experiences in the 'outside' world and national service, marries Jeanne the Parisienne, and settles down, despite the pessimistic picture given of the rural community, to a relatively happy family existence. Although it is possible to see in this change of viewpoint---as Mathé did---a device to develop a different, and even less indulgent, perspective of life in Vouzances,

1. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.73.

2. Rose et sa Parisienne, pp.31-32.

the advantage gained does not compensate for the disruption caused. [1.] The character of Lucien had previously been insufficiently developed for the reader either to take interest, or place any trust, in his observations. Mathé was on firmer ground, however, when he saw in Lucien's return to the countryside the only reversal of the trend in Guillaumin's novels since La Vie d'un simple for the characters to abandon rural life: "Il montre des paysans, des paysannes, las de la terre et des ingrats travaux, qui s'évadent vers l'usine, la caserne, la débauche, l'action sociale, voire la mare où, à défaut d'un bonheur relatif, on trouve la paix éternelle. Près du sol, Albert Manceau, Baptiste et sa femme, Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, constituent le cycle des désadaptés ---car, privés de l'appui d'un manche---l'outil est la sauvegarde du terrien---ils s'effondrent." [2.] If the structure of Rose et sa Parisienne is confused, its moralistic purpose seems clear. The rural workers are shown their behavioural defects and how they are not compatible with the author's ideal of enlightened solidarity. The solution to their predicament does not lie in aping the bourgeoisie but in formulating a new social ethic. The limited force that this novel does possess depends to an extent on a reading of the subsequent works. Only then does it become clear by implication that the key to social advancement remains in the countryside and any attempt to flee rather than improve an imperfect situation must end in yet greater deprivation.

1. See Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.329.
2. Ibid., p.345.

Albert Manceau, adjudant and Baptiste et sa femme.

Following La Vie d'un simple and Près du sol, two works concentrating on the peasant character viewed in its natural environment, Albert Manceau, adjudant, completed in the Spring of 1905, was published by Fasquelle the following year. As the title suggests, Guillaumin decided to transpose his subject from countryside to barracks in order to develop a variation on his theme of educating the peasantry by exposing the dangers confronting them. In common with the majority of his class, Guillaumin viewed the military with suspicion, resenting its conscription of young men needed to ensure the harvest. Like many working class intellectuals during the years immediately preceding 1914, he was a convert to pacifism, a theme which emerges frequently from this chronicle of barracks life.

The novel follows the simple plot line of a roman à thèse. The young peasant Albert Manceau abandons the land for a life in the army. Although successful in his chosen career---he advances from private soldier to the rank of caporal, sergent, and finally adjudant---his promotion is seen as the reward of a developing talent for subterfuge and fraud. It is the moral degeneration of the peasant character contaminated by contact with the military which provides the dramatic impetus for this novel. It is not a theme that Guillaumin handles skilfully, relying upon naïve caricature to achieve his didactic purpose.

In his letter of 11 December 1904 to the publisher Stock Guillaumin wrote that, "L'oeuvre à laquelle je travaille actuellement sera importante; bonne? je ne sais! Ce sera l'histoire d'un jeune campagnard qui s'engage, rengage, devient adjudant; changement progressif de mentalité, et surtout des tableaux." [1] To this end he was able to draw on the memories

1. P.-V. Stock, Mémorandum d'un éditeur, Paris 1936, p.251.

of his own period of national service spent at Aurillac between 1893 and 1896. [1.] Writing to Eugène Fournière the following year, just after completing the novel, he indicated the nature of the "changement de mentalité" he had attempted: "L'idée dominante a été de montrer l'influence de la caserne sur la mentalité d'un compagnard rengagé et comme quoi on peut être militaire méritant en même temps qu'un homme méprisable et sans conscience." [2.]

Most revealing about the ultimate form the novel took was a conversation Guillaumin had with Charles-Louis Philippe in the Spring of 1906. It is clear that, if the author's own observation of military life provided the basis for Manceau's experience, the general tone of the work was influenced by another source. Just as a reading of Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant had suggested the subject for La Vie d'un simple, it was the example of pacifist writers that encouraged Guillaumin to combine with his defence of peasant values an attack on the absurdity of militarism. In particular, it was Lucien Descaves' exposure of the horrors of barracks life in peacetime that seems to have affected him: "Au début de 1906 [...] j'entretenais [Philippe] d'une autre oeuvre, écrite d'après les souvenirs de mon temps de service, sous l'influence de la lecture des Sous-Offs et des proses anti-militaristes alors très en honneur dans les publications d'avant-garde." [3.]

1. During the 1914-1918 war he was mobilised and stationed in the Vosges. His war notes were collected and included in the volume Notes paysannes et villageoises published by the Bibliothèque d'éducation, Paris, 1925.

2. Letter dated 22 April 1905. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.59.

3. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, pp.105-106.

Although a sprinkling of notices appeared in the contemporary press to record its publication, Albert Manceau was ignored by the critics. An exception was the normally indulgent Rachilde who wrote in the Mercure de France that the novel was "instructif" but that it "péchait par l'excès même du détail." [1] Although written in the third person, the work does indeed bear the stamp of personal recollection, and this tone of the journal intime degenerates on occasion into indiscriminate elaboration of detail. Guillaumin transposes, for example, the entire texts of six popular army songs, doubtless intending them to enhance the authenticity of the life in the caserne he is trying to reproduce. The result, however, is to interrupt the narrative line unnecessarily and risk losing the reader's interest. At another point a lengthy and intricate description of the correct way to present arms is provided, with similar effect. The author often loses a sense of perspective in his mania for transcribing detail. At one unfortunate juncture he needs five pages to record the death of one of the barracks dogs, elsewhere telescoping into several lines events more important to sustaining the plot. The 'diary' nature of the novel is reinforced by the intrusion of whole chapters which have no apparent connection with the rest of the work, but appear rather to be faits divers the author cannot refrain from elaborating. An excellent illustration of this is Chapter twenty-three which recounts, with uncomfortable emphasis on bloody detail, the murder of the local mason's wife by her husband. It was precisely this uncertain control over the range of detail to be included which prompted Mathé's criticism that the novel had, "[...] l'allure

1. Mercure de France, 15 August 1906, p.581.

d'un journal intime trop minutieusement tenu à jour." [1.]

More important than the quantity, however, is the quality of this detail. The tendency to include the bizarre and the disgusting is strong, and Albert Manceau owes significantly more to the naturalist tradition than any of the other novels. That this work is atypical of Guillaumin's general style suggests to what extent he was impressed by the sordid realism of Descaves' Sous-Offs. More than coincidental traces of Zolaesque naturalism can also be detected. A description of the barracks after one group of conscripts has been demobbed bears an obvious similarity to the animation of the Voreux pit in Germinal: "D'être plus calme la caserne semblait plus triste: la grande bête souffrait de n'avoir pas sa pitance normale de vies à broyer; elle attendait l'internement d'une nouvelle fournée d'esclaves." [2.]

Traces of Zola's concept of an hérédité du sang are also to be found. It is significant, for example, that the hero Albert is a bastard, "[...] né deux ans avant le mariage de sa mère." [3.] Although the identity of his father cannot be precisely established, several candidates are suspected; men from the lowest social rank of a farm servant to a certain law student, "[...] dont les parents étaient les plus gros bourgeois de Nozeray." [4.] The bourgeois blood in his veins helps explain his determination to escape the land for a materially more rewarding career in the army. When he learns

1. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.304.
2. Albert Manceau, adjudant, Paris 1906, p.177.
3. Ibid., p.12.
4. Ibid., p.13.

of Albert's decision, François Dufloux, the métayer on whose farm Manceau worked, makes a point of remarking to him that, "Pardi, il y a longtemps que je l'ai vu que tu ne ferais pas un bounhoumme; tu sors, toi, de la culotte d'un bourgeois." [1].

It is in Guillaumin's preoccupation with repugnant detail that the connection between Albert Manceau and nineteenth-century naturalism is most evident. Whether in descriptions of the vomit-soaked beds of drunken conscripts, the running sores on the face of syphilitic sergeant Picard or the unnecessarily violent end of the barracks dog which is shot fifteen times and buried half alive, Guillaumin abandons his usual measured tone and sets out deliberately to shock the reader. The detrimental effect such exaggeration has on the viability of this novel may be guessed from the above, but nowhere is the disintegration of narrative control better instanced than in the episode of Marie Brunel. She is a filthy, ugly and poverty-stricken farm servant whom Manceau, while on manoeuvres in the countryside, makes pregnant. Abandoned and unable to cope, she smothers the newly born child, and Guillaumin makes use of the resulting trial to give free rein to the morbid facet of his imagination. In order to dispose of the body Marie chops up the corpse with an axe and a knife and mixes some of the pieces with the pigs' feed. Other bits are given to the dog to eat, and it is the dog which eventually proves to be her undoing: "Mais il arriva que le chien abandonna dans la rue---presque intact---le morceau dont il avait été gratifié, l'avant-bras gauche et la main." [2].

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, p.21.

2. Ibid., p.355.

This lack of subtlety has its counterpart in the artificial exaggeration of theme, an inherent danger in all romans à thèse. Guillaumin's anti-militarism is fired by an attack on the morality of the middle class who are seen to perpetuate the system to ensure their own survival. Although bourgeois materialism and the elitism of the contemporary army were both fields rich for literary exploration, Guillaumin wasted the opportunity to produce an instructive work---his first priority for the novel---by allowing prejudice to overpower his responsibilities as a writer. It was the aggressiveness of the attack which prompted several editors, including Calmann-Lévy who had published Près du sol, to refuse the novel. It required all of Charles-Louis Philippe's power of intercession to have his friend's work finally accepted by Fasquelle.

Albert Manceau is not a believable work, the characters being two dimensional illustrations of either exploiters or exploited. The portrayal of one of the domineering bourgeois officers is typical of Guillaumin's method. The sadistic nature of the delight the young man takes in bullying the conscripts is magnified by certain innuendoes made about his sexuality: "Il était grand, roux et quasi glabre; il avait de grosses joues, les lèvres minces, un sourire niais, les yeux jaunes et pas de sourcils; tête à gifles, tête de putain qui a fait son temps; on le disait d'ailleurs presque hermaphrodite." [1]

The army is controlled by the bourgeois who are seen as universally malicious. In presenting another officer, lieutenant Delby, Guillaumin abandons the relative sophistication, instanced above, of revealing character through physical

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, p.74.

appearance and resorts to the baldest polemic:

> ---Je suis un bourgeois; mes parents sont riches; j'ai reçu de l'instruction, de l'éducation, je fréquente la bonne compagnie; et mon métier d'officer est un métier de bourgeois [...] Vous, vous êtes des gens du peuple, des brutes aux mains calleuses et au cerveau frustre [...] Pour mon compte, cela me plaît énormément de vous traiter en esclaves [...] Je me fais l'effet d'un seigneur d'autrefois se jouant de la canaille. [1].

The caricature of the despotic snob is total and the figure loses all interest and credibility, merely assuming, like the country doctor in Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant, a passive part in the author's social equation. The novel is full of similar characters, from the mother of a young officer ("[...] son accueil fut d'un poli glacial qui laissait percer le dépit de la grande dame obligée de condescendre, pour la tranquillité de son fils, à admettre à sa table de la canaille"[2].) to representatives of the landowning class similar to those attacked in La Vie d'un simple ("M.Varson ne s'arrêta guère; il n'aimait pas se commettre avec les travailleurs; on a son rang à tenir, n'est-il pas vrai?"[3].).

Guillaumin places the reader under a double obligation. If he is asked to accept this distorted proposition about the essential nature of the bourgeoisie, he is also presented with the corollary: that the people are intrinsically humane. On his arrival at the barracks the young peasant Manceau is trusting and honest. When told, for example, that he will have to steal a tunic to replace one taken from him, he is repelled: "Voler! ce mot obstinément battait son crâne avec

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, pp.217-218.
2. Ibid., p.205.
3. Ibid., p.181.

un bien vilain son; et l'acte répugnait à sa conscience droite et saine." [1] Similarly, the great mass of the peuple who make up the ranks display, when put together, a social cohesion that would be impossible among the egocentric bourgeoisie: "Ils étaient des camarades presque égaux, ils fraternisaient dans le dégoût commun des exercices, des corvées, des mille insanités du métier [...]". [2] They may be illiterate and uncouth but in their Rousseauesque simplicity they represent a cleansing force capable, when their time comes, of revitalising an outdated bourgeois society. "Les plus indignes, les plus déshérités", wrote Mathé, "Guillaumin les excuse à cause de leurs misères. Il voit en ces hommes „les enfants du peuple, timides, simples, et naïfs„, opprimés par les représentants des classes possédantes." [3]

As we have already seen in reference to La Vie d'un simple, Près du sol and Rose et sa Parisienne, this sort of idealisation of the working class is not typical of Guillaumin's writing. He meant his novels to have a didactic edge not only for the middle class reading public, who were confronted there with the consequences of their social attitudes, but also for the workers the first step in whose advancement lay in an honest self-evaluation. This polarisation was, however, necessary in order to put in relief the gradual process of moral and physical degeneration which Manceau undergoes as a result of prolonged contact with bourgeois values. One only has to consider his callous treatment of Marie Brunel to

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, p.85.
2. Ibid., p.173.
3. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.317.

appreciate this transformation. In time he becomes an adroit swindler, taking large profits by falsifying the regiment's food inventory. His remark to a colleague who refuses to join him in this activity contrasts sharply with his earlier indignation when it was a question of stealing a shirt; "Eh bien, mon vieux, je t'admire, mais je suis forcé de te déclarer que tu es un sacré fourneau. Des scrupules ici... ah! là, là... Tu n'es pas fait pour le métier; non!" [1]. Although elsewhere this bourgeois-worker dichotomy does not produce such naïvely delineated moral comparison, the additional force of Guillaumin's anti-militarism in this novel, with its inevitable anti-Establishment overtones, results in the unacceptably high polemical content of Albert Manceau.

Echoes of themes previously treated can be detected, although they are never strong enough to deflect the course of the novel's moral preoccupations. The double-edged value of peasant education is briefly reintroduced, having provided a substantial theme for Près du sol. There the frivolous nature of the education received by Maria Vaureil was in part responsible for the girl's suicide. To be desirable instruction must, in Guillaumin's view, serve to strengthen the workers' sense of class solidarity and provide them with appropriate tools to advance their material welfare. It is significant that the books Manceau read were romanticised accounts of travel and adventure whose heroes habitually rose from humble beginnings to acquire wealth and position. The narrator interrupts his story to clarify directly the author's own view:

> Hélas! parmi ceux qui ont quitté leur village natal, riches d'illusions, rêvant [...] d'acquérir la fortune et

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, p.235.

> la gloire, combien n'ont abouti qu'à la pire déchéance: C'est peut-être un grand tort de donner aux enfants des livres qui soient des histoires d'hommes exceptionnels partis de très bas. [1].

The fatalistic aspect of Guillaumin's thought, although not as acute as Philippe's and less frequently visible, makes an occasional appearance in this novel: "Il est des petites ouvrières pauvres, de familles douteuses, qui sont destinées à tourner mal. Il est des sous-officiers désoeuvrés en âge de jeter leur gourme: les premières sont les instruments de plaisir des seconds; elles font ainsi leurs débuts dans la prostitution; la vie est bien organisée." [2]. The ironical bitterness of these remarks about one of the several local virgins Manceau deflowers during the course of his degradation is strongly reminiscent of that Philippe used to convey the predicament of Berthe Méténier and Marie Donadieu.

In Albert Manceau nothing is new, and everything is subordinate to the moral obsessions of its author. During one of Manceau's visits home on leave Guillaumin tries to use regional dialect, as he did with some effect in La Vie d'un simple. Although the attempt is immediately abandoned, the purpose here is to accentuate the growing rift between Manceau and his family by juxtaposing his sister's peasant speech ("---Voué soué qu'est parti avant d'tirer; o y a pas maigri là-bas!... fit l'une qui parlait encore tout à fait comme autrefois" [3].) and the hero's articulate French. The effort is entirely misplaced, however, since at no time is the linguistic cadre of the peasants ever established, and Manceau

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, pp.14-15.
2. Ibid., p.296.
3. Ibid., p.180.

cannot be seen to depart from something that was never his. The effect is counterproductive, with the sister's remarks surfacing as an incongruous intrusion into the established tone of the novel. It is one of several inconsistencies that, in a work as biased towards them as Albert Manceau is, the author should make so little effort to incorporate an essential part of the peasant's cultural heritage. His ultimate message to them is nonetheless unequivocal. Although full of hardship, life on the land is conducive to moral and physical health and is preferable to the illusion of prosperity offered elsewhere. "Oui, j'ai su me tirer d'affaire," Manceau confides in a friend at the end of the novel, "seulement, voilà, j'ai cette sacrée maladie d'estomac... On ne peut jamais être heureux... " [1.]

Baptiste et sa femme.

Guillaumin's penultimate novel first appeared en feuilleton in the December 1909 numbers of La Grande Revue. [2.] Like Albert Manceau, adjudant, Baptiste follows the roman à these tradition, exposing the evils of life in the cities and, in particular, the consequences which await any peasant who abandons the land to make his way there. This novel is unique

1. Albert Manceau, adjudant, p.387.

2. Its serial publication was repeated in La Revue hebdomadaire (February 1910, pp.63-91; 241-263; 382-409; 493-520, and March 1910, pp.110-129; 234-258; 382-400; 540-568) and Le Petit Limousin, Limoges (14 and 21 August 1936). In 1911---after repeated intercession on Guillaumin's behalf by Valery Larbaud---Fasquelle issued the first and only volume edition of Baptiste et sa femme. It is from this that all references to the text are taken.

in Guillaumin's work in that here alone did the author venture into regions beyond those of personal experience. In Manceau, life in the barracks outside the peasant cadre native to Guillaumin had provoked a greater imaginative response than had been evident in his non-dramatic approach to the confessional Vie d'un simple. This resulted, as we have seen, in a series of often melodramatic anecdotes whose naturalistic details the author emphasised. Freed in Baptiste from almost all constraints imposed by autobiography, Guillaumin developed this trend at the expense of the novel whose credibility is undermined by persistent caricature and unnaturally dramatic plot progression. Unlike Zola, Guillaumin was incapable of extracting symbolic significance from a hyperbolic vision of reality. Whereas much of the force of L'Assommoir resides in its ability to convey the impression of urban evil manifest through a group of characters, Baptiste et sa femme depends upon a series of moral statements and pertinent illustration to coerce the reader into accepting the author's social conclusions.

The central characters are Baptiste Aubry, a thirty-year-old métayer, recently married to Valentine, herself the daughter of a "petit cultivateur-jardinier." On the prompting of his wife, Baptiste leaves the farm he has been working with the rest of his family and sets up as an innkeeper in Montlugon. Almost immediately begins a decline in his fortunes that continues almost unbroken to the end of the novel. Bored by the intermittent nature of the work, Baptiste leaves the inn to his wife and takes a job in a local glass factory. Valentine quickly becomes the mistress of one of her bourgeois clients and runs off with him to Paris. "Accablé de malheur",

Baptiste lets the inn and returns to the farm hoping to find solace in familiar and rural surroundings. This return of the prodigal son does not produce the sudden rejuvenation both Baptiste and the reader might reasonably have expected, since two years in the city have been enough --- like Manceau's experience in the barracks --- to poison the soul: "La vérité, c'est que l'essence même de son être a subi une déformation indélébile; c'est ainsi que sa confiance en la vie est brisée à jamais." [1] Valentine too, penniless and abandoned by her lover in Paris, returns but finds herself and her husband rejected by both families. They go back to the city where Baptiste finds employment in a chemical factory. After an initial period of destitution living in an hotel room---the sordidness of which Guillaumin exploits fully---their prospects begin to improve as they manage to save a modest sum. The optimism is short-lived and a strike at the factory precipitates a breakdown in Baptiste's health. With Valentine off again to become the mistress of a "gros bourgeois", Baptiste shares the squalor of a shanty town with a ragman who has befriended him. The degradation of the hero is complete as he begins to drink heavily until his uncle Blaise, deus ex machina, arrives. Baptiste is removed to the farm where the countryside will be allowed to counteract the urban poison flowing in his veins and to reclaim its son.

Reviewing Baptiste et sa femme for the Times Literary Supplement an anonymous critic wrote that, "This is one of those serious, thoughtful studies of peasant life and of the

1. Baptiste et sa femme, p.251.

influence of a new environment on peasant character in which French novelists have always excelled [...] As is invariably the case with this type of story, the author's wish is to send all workers as far as may be back to the land." [1] Part of a short article intended to introduce to the British public the latest work of the still largely unknown Guillaumin, this summary is, within its limited scope, accurate. Although it showed little enthusiasm for Baptiste it was much more instructive comment than the verdict of the unremittingly accommodating Rachilde that, "Sobrement écrit, ce livre est intéressant par son souci de vérité et du détail bien placé." [2]

In one of the few exhaustive reviews, J.Ernest-Charles identified his reservations about the work as resulting from a lack of control in the use of that realistic detail which had impressed Rachilde. He acknowledged that contemporary novels about the peasantry had social as well as purely literary significance. He saw little wrong in this mixture provided that it did not become didactic. Social concern properly handled was as viable a theme as time, love or any of the other traditional literary preoccupations. "Vous ne pourrez empêcher que les idées sociales ne se glissent dans les oeuvres romanesques. Puissent-elles seulement ne pas les embarrasser, les encombrer, les étouffer!" [3] Ernest-Charles recognised that Guillaumin's greatest achievement was in breaking with the tradition of caricature in the presentation of the peasant figure. Spared Balzac's pessimism, Sand's idealisation and

1. Times Literary Supplement, London, 9 March 1911, p.104.
2. Mercure de France, 1 April 1911, p.599.
3. La Grande Revue, 25 March 1911, p.400.

the sensationalism of Zola, "Le paysan est assuré aujourd'hui de ne plus être la victime de satiristes impitoyables. On ne le caricature point. Il est sujet de littérature." [1] The critic appeared to consider Guillaumin in the mould of the nineteenth century realist tradition whose aim was the abolition of subjective viewpoint: "Emile Guillaumin [...] n'invente rien. Il copie la réalité. La vie lui dicte les incidents de son livre. Mais il les distribue avec ordre. Il sait composer." [2] Similarly, if Guillaumin was to be faulted it was a standard criticism levelled at the realists which would be used against him. For all its organisational strengths, Ernest-Charles regretted that in the novel all emotional identification of author with subject was excluded by the emphasis on documentation and that occasionally Baptiste et sa femme was reduced to "le procès-verbal d'une existence triste."

Jean-Richard Bloch had not shared the general enthusiasm among critics over the new 'genre paysan' proclaimed in the wake of La Vie d'un simple. He was not impressed by the fact that Guillaumin was a peasant, "[...] pas plus qu'à l'état de couturière de Mademoiselle Marguerite Audoux [...] De semblables détails peuvent me faire estimer l'individu; ils ne feront jamais qu'un mauvais livre devienne un bon livre." [3] He considered Baptiste the weakest of the novels: "Telle qu'elle est," he wrote, "l'oeuvre de Guillaumin compte néanmoins parmi celle qui ne peuvent se dédaigner ni s'oublier.

1. La Grande Revue, 25 March 1911, p.399.
2. Ibid., p.402.
3. Jean-Richard Bloch, Carnaval est mort, Editions de la Nouvelle Revue Française, Paris 1920, p.202.

Je fais exception pour Baptiste et sa femme, que je ne suis pas parvenu à goûter." [1] Like Ernest-Charles he was of the opinion that Guillaumin's strength lay in his power of documentation and not in the realm of imaginative fiction. He admitted that he would have preferred to see the entire oeuvre sub-titled "Contribution à la connaissance de la condition et des moeurs paysannes dans le centre de la France à la fin du XIX^{e} siècle et au commencement du XX^{e} siècle." He denied that any of the novels possessed a coherent plot, maintaining that the only true hero was "le travail des champs"; "Les personnages qu'il met en scène sont auprès de lui de pâles silhouettes." [2] Although he identified a strand of melancholy and pessimism running throughout the novels, in Baptiste they became the dominant feature in the choice of scenes described. Under such circumstances the lack of strong characterisation to counterbalance the worst of the excesses was for Bloch the determining factor in the failure of this novel.

In a letter dated 2 April 1911 to Alexandre Boisserie Guillaumin described what he had tried to do in this novel: "[...] J'ai surtout voulu faire le roman du paysan indécis, faible et de la jeune fille qui rêve „d'autre chose„ sans bien savoir ce qu'elle veut [...] Ces deux types abondent par chez nous et sont plus que d'autres les jouets de la vie... Et cela m'a procuré l'occasion de montrer l'influence fréquente de la femme sur la détermination des transfuges du

1. See article which appeared originally in L'Effort (April 1912) and which was re-printed in Bloch's Carnaval est mort, p.201.

2. Ibid., p.201.

sol et l'influence nocive de la ville sur un bon garçon sans volonté." [1] The intention was to create another roman à these. Baptiste differed, however, in two distinct ways from its predecessors. Although the contaminating influence of the bourgeois mentality on peasant psychology was a preferred theme in the works from La Vie to Rose et sa Parisienne, for the first time the conflict was openly presented as one between the industrialised city and the countryside. It was also the first time that he had introduced his arbitrary suggestion that it was women rather than the force of economic circumstance who were the prime cause of rural depopulation.

Previously Guillaumin had been careful not to idealise the rural way of life, always giving due weight to the physical hardship and meagre reward involved. In Baptiste, however, a dichotomy is established worthy of Fénelon or Rousseau between the absolute evil of the towns and the virtues of the countryside. Uncharacteristically of Guillaumin's heroes, Baptiste waxes nostalgic about his station in life when contemplating his impending move to Montluçon. In contrast to his predecessors who suffered in silence the rigours of farm labour, Baptiste openly laments its passing:

> "Oh! comment ne plus faire cela; Comment ne plus suivre le cours de l'année en exécutant les différents travaux que chaque saison ramène? Comment n'avoir plus le souci des récoltes et des bêtes?" [2]

Here as elsewhere, Guillaumin shuns the purely picturesque use of Nature which the regionalists favoured to enhance their apology for rural culture. [3] Nature is pressed into the service

1. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, pp.102.103.
2. Baptiste et sa femme, p.106.
3. Guillaumin succumbed to quite another tendency of regionalist literature. On several occasions the narrative is unnecessarily interrupted by short

of conveying the moral difference between the urban and rural environments but the emphasis is always on either the monotonous or forbidding aspect of the elements, an emphasis which helps establish the admonitory tone governing the novel. As Baptiste and Valentine make their way to Montluçon to inspect the inn, the first view they have of the town is presented in these terms:

> C'est un matin frisquet, presque clair: une belle journée d'été de la Saint-Martin se prépare. Au loin, dans les prairies basses, quelques écharpes de brume voilent de leur gaze légère les gazon jaunis. Mais là-bas, dans la vallée où la ville est tapie, monte le brouillard sans fin vomi par les cheminées d'usine. [1.]

The references to the town "crouching" in wait for Baptiste and his wife, and the smoke "vomit ed" from the chimneys are indicative of Guillaumin's repeated use of imagery to bring inanimate objects to life to convey the sinister nature of man's environment. The obvious parallel is with Zola, and the extended descriptions of the working class quarter in Montluçon are reminiscent of the soulless corons which helped establish atmosphere in Germinal: "Toutes les fumées crachées par les cheminées des usines s'amalgamaient en un nuage unique qui planait au-dessus des maisons grises. Et de nouveaux jets, se condensant en volutes successives, allaient se perdre insensiblement dans le nuage éternel." [2.]

> essays on the topography or history of the Bourbonnais. Such digression was a favourite device among the regionalists for emphasising local colour in their writing but was particularly unsuitable for Guillaumin's purposes in this novel. See, for example, pp.136-137 for a gratuitous résumé of the history of Montluçon.

1. Baptiste et sa femme, p.75.

2. Ibid., p.79.

Occasionally Guillaumin establishes a correspondance worthy of the symbolists, although in context his tendency is to spoil the effect by overstating it. During the strike in the chemical factory, for example, the natural elements accompany a growing tension between those who are determined to continue the conflict and those wanting to return to work: "Les coups de poing, les coups de cailloux se multipliaient, cependant que, d'un ciel gris et morne, la pluie ironique tombait à flots, douchant impartialement les uns et les autres."[1] Guillaumin's use of the pathetic fallacy is, on the whole, much less ambitious than that employed by Zola, who in La Terre manipulated it to reinforce an entire spectrum of human emotions. In Baptiste there is regular intervention of the "morne", "triste" and "gris" aspects of the elements to magnify the pessimism Guillaumin tries to establish in the story of Baptiste's flight from the countryside.[2] The scope is too narrow, however, and the device too often employed for it to be other than an obvious example of the author striving for an effect which ultimately eludes him.

More than anything else this novel is flawed by an excessively episodic construction which often borders on

1. Baptiste et sa femme, p.298.

2. The one exception to this is couched in terms again reminiscent of Zola. Echoing the final paragraph of Germinal in which optimism for the workers' future is conveyed in images of renascent Nature, the natural world is seen to encroach upon and remain superior to the degrading conditions in Baptiste's factory: "Même dans le quartier des usines [...] le renouveau met une nuance de poésie. Dans les tas de machefer, de cendre ou de limaille, dans tous les détritus accumulés [...] des plantes obstinées prennent vie." (Baptiste et sa femme, p.143.)

melodrama, an element conspicuously absent elsewhere in the sober prose of Guillaumin. To a greater extent than in the other works the characters in Baptiste are significant for what they do and not for any articulate reflection---on their own behalf or through a privileged narrator---on the life they lead. Unlike the peasants in René Bazin's La Terre qui meurt, which also treated the problem of rural depopulation, [1] Baptiste and his wife are not endowed with the writer's talent for contemplation and expression. If on the one hand this enhances the characters' authenticity as truly representative members of their class, it can put disproportionate emphasis on the plot to bind the novel together. It is precisely this obligation on the author which forces the errors in Baptiste. Despite the insistence of critics like Ernest-Charles and Bloch that Guillaumin does not 'invent', it is an overambitious imagination which spoils the work. In the urban setting of Baptiste et sa femme Guillaumin finds himself in alien territory and forced to manufacture rather than recollect experience. While it may be argued that elsewhere the "travail des champs" is the single hero in Guillaumin's works, in Baptiste the rural factor is significant only by its absence. Urban and factory life was entirely unknown to the author. Attempts to create the atmosphere of the inn or the chemical works resulted in a caricature of both, where scenes of loose women and intoxicated clients alternated with those of animalised workers in the factory.

Ignorance of the problems of urban living he was trying to simulate made Guillaumin intensely defensive about the position

1. René Bazin, La Terre qui meurt, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1900.

of his peasant characters. Unsure about the precise nature of the forces threatening them he entrenched himself in a social conservatism that seemed to despair of any possibility of breaching class barriers. Although individuals from one environment may be tainted by the attractions offered by the other, true integration is not possible, and defection from one's native ranks leads to destruction. Seeing urban and rural workers as totally incompatible may have served to enforce Guillaumin's plea to the peasants not to leave the land, but it vitiated Rousseau's contention that the therapeutic value in Nature was universally capable of restoring human character disfigured by the pressures of modern society. To Guillaumin the peasantry appeared to be the race élue and members of any other social class were left to their own devices.

This question of environment is closely related to the theme of fatality which, as we have seen, plays a part in all the novels. The concept at work here is identical to Zola's fatalité du milieu, itself the equivalent of modern sociology's environmental imprinting. The process is neither as crude nor as consistent as Pavlovian conditioning. Baptiste's peasant nature was altered by his contact with life in Montluçon. The influence of his background was, however, so profound that it precluded the possibility of contentment outside its own circle. For a character like Baptiste this negative inducement to return to the land was sufficient. Guillaumin seriously undermined the didactic value in Baptiste's return home by insisting on his almost pathological lack of volonté. In his eagerness to expose this weakness as endemic to the peasant class---and one on which foundered his own efforts to form rural cooperatives ---Guillaumin uncharacteristically magnifies it to the point

that his hero assumes traits of the Romantic prototype. Chateaubriand's René as much as Baptiste is identified in such descriptions, of which the following is typical: "Il est pénétré de tout le mystère qui plane sur la créature ignorante et faible, agissant dans une perpétuelle inconscience, avec l'entière inaptitude de prévoir les conséquences de l'acte qu'elle accomplit [...] Hélas! où va tomber cette feuille chétive que le vent précipite?" [1]. The image of the withered leaf is taken up elsewhere in the narrative, and it is a further indication of the weakness in composition of this novel that unnecessary exposition intrudes to reinforce a statement already made by more literary means. Baptiste, the author explains on one occasion, "[...] éprouve l'intense besoin d'être guidé; il est comme un enfant indécis et faible; il lui faut la protection, les conseils d'une expérience en qui puisse s'annihiler sa volonté propre."[2].

The figure of Valentine is important for two reasons. First, it is clear that in her Guillaumin both substantiates and attenuates the implications of environmental fatality developed in Baptiste. Like her husband, Valentine is of peasant stock, being the daughter of a "petit cultivateur-jardinier". As a girl she spent a few days in Montluçon with

1. Baptiste et sa femme, p.43. Compare the description of other peasant émigrés in the factory who consistently thwart efforts by the organisers to coordinate an effective strike: "Ceux-ci savaient avoir contre eux, à la fois, la masse inerte et veule des résignés qu'aucun sursaut d'enthousiasme ne peut atteindre, et les exubérants, les brouillons [...], grands enfants naïfs, prompts aux emballements comme aux découragements, manquant d'intelligence et de volonté." (p.280.)

2. Ibid., p.97.

her cousin who was married to a clerk and, although its manifestations were different, the unsettling effect of this brief encounter with urban life was no less great for her than for Baptiste: "[...] Les impressions de ces quelques jours se gravèrent en images radieuses dans la petite tête blonde évaporée de Valentine." [1] The seed having been planted, the surrender to her seducer at the inn appears inevitable: "Elle était si heureuse d'être désirée par ce beau monsieur qui réalisait pour elle l'exemple vivant de ce que la ville offre de brillant, de raffiné, de distingué." [2] The significant difference between her and Baptiste, however, is the degree to which her actions are determined less by conditioning than by conscience acts of will. If her cursory acquaintance with the urban lifestyle prompts her to doubt the value of Baptiste and everything connected with her previous existence on the land, her flight is an application of will unthinkable in the passive Baptiste. The concept of environmental determinism falters here and Guillaumin weakens his hypothesis that happiness for the peasant can only be found in the countryside. Granted, no indication is given after Valentine's flight to Paris of her ultimate <u>état d'âme</u> or whether she has been able to escape entirely her peasant upbringing. Within the context of the narrative, however, we see a triumph of the individual over a pervasive fatality which elsewhere the author is obviously attempting to establish.

If Guillaumin appears to lose control of this character as far as concerns the general didactic purpose of the novel,

1. <u>Baptiste et sa femme</u>, p.28.
2. <u>Ibid</u>., p.197.

on one issue he leaves the reader in no doubt about Valentine's significance. She is meant to convey that sinister aspect of feminine influence which he regarded as partly responsible for the exodus to the cities. This concept is a recurrent feature in his journalistic writing. In an article entitled "Femmes et jeunes filles à la campagne" he admonishes the entire younger generation of peasant for being less concerned with his cultural heritage and welfare of his class than with acquiring the material trappings of urban society: "C'est que nous sommes gangrenés jusqu'aux moelles, les femmes plus encore que les hommes, de virus aristocratique." [1]. In "La Femme contre la terre" he is more categorical in his denunciation of women: "La jeune paysanne qui n'aime pas la campagne est légion en France. Dès l'instant qu'elle a pris goût à l'élégance, l'isolement, la boue, les corvées grossières lui ont répugné davantage [...] Et chez toutes les jeunes filles, le même besoin de luxe, le même désir de paraître, le même rêve de devenir dans un centre aux rues propres une ménagère simplement." [2]. It is quite clear that Valentine is cast in the role of temptress who, persuading Baptiste to leave the land, ensures his eventual humiliation in the town. Unlike Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, which takes up this anti-feminist stance but manages to place it in perspective against economic and social factors, Baptiste lays the entire blame at the feet of Woman. Such a dubious propogition reinforces the impression of a deliberate exaggeration at work in this novel and leads Baptiste to the brink of allegory.

1. La Grande Revue, 10 July 1910, p.152.

2. Notes paysannes et villageoises, Bibliothèque d'Education, Paris 1925, pp.85-86.

A lack of consistency and moderation are the major flaws in Baptiste et sa femme. We have already seen to what extent Guillaumin's characters and themes tend to contradict themselves here. The compositional exaggeration noted may only partly be seen as the result of arbitrary prejudice typified by his views on women. In the main it stems from an inability to develop an imaginatively created narrative. As long as Guillaumin could rely on personal recollections or those furnished by neighbours, parents and grandparents, structural cohesion in the novels could be maintained. When, however, he forced himself to treat subjects beyond this intimate frame of reference his imagination was not subtle enough to integrate the component parts. The result is that the narrative line in Baptiste is encumbered by episodes where anecdote compounds anecdote and the credulity of the reader is pushed to its limits.

One example is sufficient to illustrate this process at work. After two years spent keeping the inn in Montluçon, Baptiste is confronted by a dazzling array of misfortune to establish the point that he ought never to have left the land. Within the span of a single day Valentine flees to Paris with her lover, taking the receipts from the inn, his younger brother Claude runs away from the farm leaving their aged mother and aunt to fend for themselves, and a servant girl with whom Baptiste has fallen in love announces her intention to marry another man. If this series of coincidences succeeds in persuading the hero of his poor judgment, Guillaumin leaves nothing to chance and as the novel ends it is Uncle Blaise who pronounces these lines as he drives his unfortunate nephew back to the country to start a new life: "---Bravo! bravo! garçon; tu as pleuré tout à l'heure et maintenant tu regardes le blé;

tu es déjà plus d'à moitié sauvé! Avant un mois, tu seras redevenu ce que tu n'aurais jamais dû cesser d'être, un bon travailleur des champs solide de la tête et des bras, un parfait honnête homme!" [1].

1. Baptiste et sa femme, p.314.

Le Syndicat de Baugignoux.

Completed at the beginning of 1911, Guillaumin's last novel was published serially by La Grande Revue in the autumn of the same year [1.] and in May of 1912 Fasquelle issued Le Syndicat de Baugignoux in one volume. [2.]

The contrast is great between the excessively episodic nature of Baptiste et sa femme and the uniform progression which constitutes the narrative of its successor. Unity of action is almost complete as Syndicat revolves around the efforts of Marcel Salembier to establish an agricultural cooperative among the labourers in his commune. The account of his attempt is essentially that of one man challenging the traditional hierarchy of landowner-intendant-sharecropper which obtained in several parts of France up to the Great War. The only digression Guillaumin allows is the cultivation of Salembier's literary interests; in this instance being a brochure which aims to promote cohesion among the peasants by sketching a history of their class through the ages. In the face of opposition from his family, widespread indifference among the métayers and a virulent press campaign mounted by the landowners, the cooperative is established with Salembier as its first president. Small but potentially significant improvements are made in working conditions and the prices

1. 10 October (pp.517-545), 25 October (pp.704-733), 10 November (pp.33-59), 25 November (pp.315-344), 10 December (pp.497-534).

2. There are two other editions. One was published by La Fenêtre Ouverte (Paris 1959), from which all textual references in the present thesis are taken, and the other formed part of Les Paysans, Editions du Burin (Paris 1972). The other half of this second volume comprised Philippe Gratton's Les Paysans which was a history of the French peasantry from antiquity to the 1960's.

which farmers must pay for seed and equipment. Despite such visible progress, however, the syndicat is doomed. Its eventual demise is due not to the predictable pressure from without applied by the bourgeois owners but to the innate conservatism and apathy of the workers themselves which opposed any alteration in the established social order. The novel ends with an embittered Salembier abandoning his hopes to improve the conditions of an entire class and reverting to the insular concerns of his own farm and family.

Le Syndicat de Baugignoux attracted little serious critical comment. Most of the reports which did not confine themselves merely to note its publication considered the work as a wholly autobiographical account of Guillaumin's own syndicalist collaboration with Michel Bernard. The warmth with which they greeted the novel had little to do with conventional literary criteria and seemed proportionate to the personal esteem in which they held its author. Henri Bachelin particularly admired Guillaumin and was concerned to exempt him from any charge of "regionalism". He was concise in his condemnation of those writers about rural life who aimed to make the particular and the picturesque ends in themselves: "Donnant à des coutumes, à des patois locaux, une importance universelle, ils se condamnent à n'écrire que des livres sans valeur générale, et qui ne rendent pas un son profondément humain." [1] His specific defence of Syndicat, however, was vague to the point of uselessness. Drawing certain parallels to Le Roy's Le Moulin du Frau he

1. Henri Bachelin, "Le Syndicat de Baugignoux", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 July 1912, p.191.

maintained that, "Il y a en eux, un je ne sais quoi d'humanité générale qui, malgré l'abondance des détails de moeurs locales, les fait sortir de leur cadre." [1] In his article on Guillaumin for La Grande Revue Joseph Voisin established the obvious link with the author's masterpiece La Vie d'un simple: "/Le Syndicat/ se rattache à La Vie d'un simple, en ce sens qu'il en est comme la continuation, un aperçu de la mise en pratique des rêves du métayer Tiennon." [2]

Subsequent critics were equally unhelpful in formulating a critical approach to Syndicat. Socialist critics, inevitably, were swayed by its political overtones and support for the novel was generated by enthusiasm for the agricultural cooperative movement. "/.../ Le Mouvement syndical de Michel Bernard et d'Emile Guillaumin, par son influence morale et éducative, son action coopérative, l'élévation de la conscience de classe qu'il permit et le sentiment qu'il donna aux métayers de leur dignité, ne faillit pas à sa tâche d'émancipation et prépara le terrain pour des tentative futures." These glowing terms in which Philippe Gratton, for example, described Guillaumin's political action on behalf of the Bourbonnais peasant explain but do not elucidate his conviction that Syndicat was Guillaumin's "best" novel. [3]

The best informed comment was provided by Paul Vernois, himself struck not so much by a thematic continuation of La Vie but rather by the same evenly paced narrative which had earlier

1. Henri Bachelin, "Le Syndicat de Baugignoux", Nouvelle Revue Française, p.192.

2. Joseph Voisin, "Emile Guillaumin", La Grande Revue, 10 October 1913, p.608.

3. Emile Guillaumin & Philippe Gratton, Les Paysans, pp.100.101.

been used to convey the monotony of peasant existence: "Jamais [...] l'auteur de cette aventure rurale n'avait consenti à se départir de cette mesure et de cette prudence qui voulaient toucher et convaincre plutôt que glorifier et exalter." [1]. If the stylistic success of this work here appreciated by Vernois is open to debate, his verdict on its general tone was aptly expressed. Respecting differences in techniques and scope between the two works, Vernois compared Syndicat with Zola's Germinal. Both treated the theme of class solidarity and social progress but where Zola was willing, albeit in the final paragraphs of his novel, to entertain the possible advancement of working class interests, Guillaumin's view was that the people would be defeated by their own inherent weaknesses. "Ce que Zola avait décrit sur le mode majeur avec Germinal, Guillaumin le peignait à nouveau en mineur dans le Syndicat de Baugignoux." [2]

Syndicat was completed in the Spring of 1911. This means that Guillaumin's work on the novel was contemporaneous with collaboration begun in 1905 with Michel Bernard in the "Fédération des Syndicats de cultivateurs de la Région bourbonnaise". As we have already noted the association's newspaper Le Travailleur rural, of which Guillaumin was editor, continued publication until December of the same year. The only novel in Guillaumin's work treating the question of peasant labour organisation was undertaken, then, not in the spirit of optimism which had marked the Bourbonnais federation's early years, but rather in the final months of its existence when it was clear

1. Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.203.

2. Ibid., p.203.

to the author that his efforts were being defeated by peasant apathy.

In an article entitled "La Terre délaissée" he had already registered concern about rural depopulation in particular and his pessimism about the future of the French peasantry in general. Taking as representative the wine growers of the Domérat region he wrote, "Le seul remède serait dans la pratique d'une solide association entre ces petits vignerons menacés de ruine. Mais, individualistes et jaloux, l'esprit d'association leur demeure étranger et il est douteux qu'ils en apprécient à temps les bienfaits." [1]. Elsewhere he characteristically accused peasant women of opposing any attempt made by their men to organise themselves: "[Il] semble bien qu'en règle générale, la femme n'accepte qu'à son corps défendant le moindre changement aux usages établis, et que les idées d'union, de solidarité, lui soit totalement étrangères [...] Si le syndicalisme masculin progresse si lentement, il n'est peut-être pas téméraire d'affirmer que la femme y est pour quelque chose." [2]. It is not surprising, therefore, that Le Syndicat de Baugignoux is not only a justification of rural syndicalism and an attack on the métayage system but also a frank critique of the workers who had themselves ensured the failure of the enterprise. In a letter to Raphaël Périé (8 September 1912) Guillaumin emphasised a point which needed no clarification for those familiar with the author's personal experience: "Peut-être dois-je ajouter que l'idée principale du Syndicat de Baugignoux fut de montrer les difficultés de créer un esprit de solidarité

1. La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 October 1910, p.205.

2. Emile Guillaumin, "Femmes et jeunes filles à la campagne", La Grande Revue, 10 July 1910, p.410.

dans un milieu rural et à quelles déceptions les militants sont voués." [1].

Guillaumin proved extremely sensitive to any suggestion that Syndicat was a simple compte rendu of his own syndicalist activities. The fact that for the first time since La Vie d'un simple he had employed first person narrative and that the topography and place names provided clearly resembled those around Ygrande encouraged this assumption. He was anxious to defend what he considered to be his reputation as an imaginative writer and tried especially hard to break the identification that was being made between him and his hero Marcel Salembier. He considered the issue of sufficient importance to be included in his dedication of the novel to Daniel Halévy in which he warned that, "[...] Marcel Salembier n'est pas plus le sosie d'un autre qu'il n'est le mien. Il représente un type de militant très vraisemblable et voilà tout."

In a letter to the editor of Le Briard (25 December 1911) he rebutted another suggestion that the model for his hero had been Michel Bernard: "Marcel Salembier exprime évidemment des idées qui sont miennes, mais il n'est pas moi, pas plus qu'il n'est Michel Bernard, bien qu'il nous ressemble à tous deux par certains côtés; il est un militant vraisemblable et, je crois, très humain, d'un mouvement syndicaliste rural. Je l'ai du moins conçu ainsi." [2].

1. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.127.

2. "Quelques lettres d'Emile Guillaumin", Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, Paris 1959, p.286. Compare the following from a letter to M.Sejournant (4 February 1912): "Vous auriez tort cependant de m'identifier complètement avec Marcel Salembier; si les pensées qu'il exprime sont bien les miennes, son histoire n'est pas la mienne. Salembier tient de Bernard autant que de moi, mais il n'est en définitive, ni lui, ni moi." (Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.408.

Guillaumin's protestations notwithstanding, Le Syndicat de Baugignoux testifies more to the author's talent for organising material than to creative imagination. From what is known of the character of the timid and self-conscious Guillaumin who preferred to active campaigning the editorship of the association's newspaper, and of the fiery oratory of the socialist Bernard, it is not difficult to see Salembier as a marriage of both. To the extent that the best of both characters was borrowed and combined in the hero Guillaumin may be said to have conformed---if in a limited capacity---to the demands of imaginative writing. Salembier represents, in fact, his only attempt to create an idealised hero, and one that stands in contrast to his realistically presented forerunners whose temperamental and physical defects were not disguised. Roger Mathé was quite justified in arguing that here Guillaumin is indulging personal fantasies: "Plus que tout, Marcel Salembier est un modèle, le personnage que Guillaumin aurait rêvé d'être, conciliant la clairvoyance de l'intellectuel et la poigne du dirigeant. Personnage symbolique, il représente l'idéal de la génération des jeunes campagnards parvenus à l'âge d'homme vers 1900." [1].

The didactic purposes of the work Guillaumin outlined in his letter to Périé. Although, as we have seen, all his novels hold in common the desire to instruct and improve the peasantry, the specifically political material from which Guillaumin constructed Syndicat rendered it less capable than its predecessors to absorb the author's various thèses and reconcile them with the requirements of imaginative literature. It is

1. Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.410.

an indication of the degree to which Guillaumin felt personally offended by the collapse of his cooperatives that his hero Salembier is so isolated from the rest of the characters. If he is in himself seen to be an exceptionally intelligent and sincere individual, when contrasted with his peasant compatriots he appears of a different---and superior---race.

If Salembier concedes that, "Dans la lutte nécessaire pour le pain quotidien, ils font preuve d'une tenacité, d'une vaillance qui les ennoblit", [1] it is precisely their necessary preoccupation with eking out a living which prevents the peasants from taking a wider view of their class condition. On one occasion he casts a disaffected eye over a group of métayers in whom he has tried unsuccessfully to infuse some enthusiasm for the syndicalist movement. "Quand je les observe de sang-froid," he admits, "j'ai conscience de l'inutilité profonde de mes exhortations; je sens que mes paroles glissent sur leur triple cuirasse d'ignorance, de méfiance et d'apathie." [2] It is in his occasionally priggish despair at the lack of formal instruction among the workers and his determination to remedy the situation that Salembier may be seen most clearly as the alter ego of Guillaumin, with his lifelong commitment to popular education. Even as he tries to organise the rural work force he is reminded daily of the task confronting him: "Les lettres mêmes que je recevais d'eux, embrouillées et diffuses, semées de barbarismes, de naïvetés et de fautes d'orthographe, accusaient, avec leur ignorance, leur manque absolu d'initiative [...]" [3] This unflattering portrait is intensified by the

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.246.
2. Ibid., p.246.
3. Ibid., p.123.

conscious comparison Salembier makes with his own cultivated and inquiring nature. He sees himself as part of a new breed of peasant, holding little common ground with the outmoded attitudes of those like the family of his wife Jeanne: "Je comparais la vie des Couturier, palissadée par l'Eglise et la tradition, à ma vie, à moi, élargie par l'étude, tourmentée de curiosités, de doutes, d'expansions informulées d'espoirs vagues." [1]. Increasingly Salembier sees himself as an isolated crusader whose estrangement from his fellows assumes Romantic overtones and mirrors Guillaumin's own position in Ygrande, in conflict with both bourgeois hostility and peasant indifference. Even those whom Salembier succeeds in attracting to the cooperatives cannot satisfy his developing mania for being 'understood': "Camarades dévoués, et sympathiques, mais qui pour tant m'ont plus d'une fois déçu pour n'avoir pas pénétré le sens essentiel de ma pensée. Alors, si ces derniers ne me comprennent qu'à moitié, quelle fausse idée de moi doivent se faire tous les autres!" [2].

For those familiar with the author's own views on the futility of attempting to cross class boundaries, Salembier's persistent refusal to cooperate with the local bourgeoisie is inevitable. Elsewhere we have seen Guillaumin's unwillingness to paint entirely black, as Philippe did, his portrait of the middle and upper classes, sensibly relying on moderation to provide his novels with a sense of the vraisemblable. Syndicat is no exception and the sympathetic treatment of the local landowner Paul Doulon-Meuget serves not only to confirm this

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.49.

2. Ibid., p.247.

trend but also---and probably unintentionally on Guillaumin's part---to alter the perspective on the hero. There is no evidence to suggest that Salembier was intended to carry even the slightest suggestion of irony. First person narrative and a gradual isolation of the central character from almost universally unattractive secondary figures would tend naturally to predispose the reader towards Marcel. The presence of Doulon-Meuget, however, serves as a foil by which to measure the intransigence of Salembier and his hermetic vision of class interests. The young landowner, who in Guillaumin's own experience had his counterpart in a certain M.Milcent, is an advocate of 'mixed' cooperatives; namely, a system to which both landowners and labourers contribute for their mutual benefit. Doulon-Meuget objects not to the concept of syndicalism itself, but rather to the extreme and exclusive nature of that proposed by Salembier. He provides reasoned arguments to conclude that Salembier's brand of activism would lead to class war and makes the sensible point that the situation of rural labourers cannot really be equated with that of industrial workers. They live directly from the fruits of their labour without the intermediary element of a cash salary and treat with their masters on a one to one basis. If Doulon-Meuget's efforts fail to enlist help in organising all the interested parties whose livelihood depends on the land, both his example of conciliation and his generous treatment of the difficult hero serve to distance the reader from Salembier. If it appears paradoxical that Guillaumin should undermine his own creation in this way, this is one of the dangers in any writing with a strong autobiographical base

where the author choosing to transcribe personal experience has less control over the course his characters follow than the one who prefers to invent.

The less than totally sympathetic nature of the hero has the effect of reducing the impact of the narrative's analysis of peasant shortcomings. These are, however, explicitly stated and although all are familiar to readers of Guillaumin's other novels they are here exposed more systematically. The absence of a loyalty to class is paramount in the hierarchy of criticism and is illustrated in three different manners. First, there is the fatalism general amongst the workers which precludes popular support for any programme of social or economic reform. Secondly, an active resistance to change within the ranks of the proletariat assists the landowners to maintain the status quo. It is Jeanne's grandfather, opposing Salembier's every step down the road to syndicalism, who incarnates the intense conservatism often characteristic of rural populations:

> ---Cela ne nous regarde pas [...]
> Les maîtres sont les maîtres [...]
> S'ils gagnent de l'argent, tant mieux pour eux: tout le monde ne peut pas être à leur place! Pour ce qui est du travailleur, il doit suivre son chemin droit et ne pas s'occuper du reste. [1]

Guillaumin frequently makes use of these onslaughts to introduce an element of irony which emphasises the ultimate futility of Salembier's efforts: "Vous feriez mieux", warns the grandfather, "de travailler votre endroit tranquille que de vous amuser à critiquer les riches pour vous attirer des histoires! Vous n'avez jamais vu un pot de terre briser un pot de fer, mais vous avez vu souvent le contraire [...]" [2]. What the old

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.47.
2. Ibid., p.176.

man does not foresee, of course, is the trahison des clercs which ensures that the Federation's destruction is wrought from within and not outside. Finally, the most pernicious result of a lack of class solidarity is the eagerness exhibited by most workers to abandon their background and aspire to the ranks of the bourgeoisie. Although even Salembier must concede that the ambition to improve one's material circumstances is natural, what he cannot accept is that this be achieved at the price of the exploitation of peasant by peasant. The target for Guillaumin's polemics here, as elsewhere in the novels, is the fermier général, or intendant, who acts as the liaison between peasant and master. Abuses of this rank were widespread under the métayage system, and what Guillaumin emphasises in Syndicat is that these middlemen were recruited almost exclusively from the peasantry itself. The narrative is broken by a letter to Salembier from the secretary of a neighbouring cooperative who complains of a certain fermier général in his commune. After explaining that this individual "[...] a débuté comme berger de moutons et de porcs; vers l'âge de quinze ans il a passé ouvrier sabotier", he continues:

> Aujourd'hui c'est un fermier général. Ce Monsieur est arrivé à pouvoir affermer quatre domaines et, bien entendu, c'est un faiseur de gueux de la pire espèce. Les métayers sont parmi les plus misérables qu'on puisse voir; il les suce jusqu'au sang; et il leur interdit de se mettre au syndicat. [1].

As long as the individual remained uncommitted to social change or motivated only by self-interest Guillaumin saw little prospect of any real improvement in the conditions of the agricultural worker.

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.119.

On the whole it is Guillaumin's opinions and prejudices, poorly integrated into the narrative of the supposedly fictional Salembier, which seriously flaw this final novel. His desire to educate the working class is compounded here by a specific emphasis on the value of collective action. As his efforts in the Bourbonnais foundered, the need to justify and explain the experiment appears to have been too strong to be excluded from the novel he was writing at the time. The unhappy result is that whole passages of syndicalist propaganda intrude to give Syndicat more the complexion of a political treatise than a novel. Chapter XXII, for example, is devoted to an exchange of articles in the regional press between Salembier and his detractors which amounts to little more than a protracted defence of Guillaumin's own social and economic theories. To make this chapter even more disjointed the narrator cites in extenso a passage on the same themes by Eugène Le Roy, "[...] le maître écrivain, qui a parlé avec tant d'autorité, tant de vraie sympathie, des terriens du Périgord." [1].

Elsewhere Salembier, convalescing after an accident in the fields, commits at length to paper plans for a general redistribution of revenue, committee management of a vast collective, common purchase of farm machinery and a revolutionary approach to educating children; in short, an agricultural Utopia. The opening lines of this 'charter' will serve to indicate the banality of a digression which is allowed to proceed unchecked for three pages:

> Le château de Fontvallée et les douze fermes de la propriété de Marcel Salembier forment un ensemble dénommé „terre de Fontvallée„ qui devient à dater de ce jour, propriété

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.181.

> collective des métayers exploitants et du propriétaire actuel.
> Chaque ferme reste autonome et les produits en appartiennent à ceux qui la cultivent sous la réserve que ceux-ci verseront annuellement, à la caisse générale de l'association, une somme équivalente aux deux tiers du taux normal des fermages dans la région de Verneuil, soit quarante francs l'hectare. [1.]

Other interruptions fragment the narrative, the most serious of which constitutes most of Chapter VII. Under the guise of a brochure Salembier is writing to prepare the way for his political activities, Guillaumin develops a short history of the peasantry similar in tone to those pockets of erudition found in the novels of Eugène Le Roy. The treatise contains extended quotation from successive chroniclers---including Turgot, Grimm and Saint-Simon---and Guillaumin even provides a footnote for a reference work on peasant history. [2.]

The didactic excesses of this work although most obvious in such passages as those noted above, where the form itself alerts the reader, are not limited to them. The stilted and improbable nature of much of the dialogue also betrays the author's willingness to press home his argument by every available means. The following exchange, for example, forms part of a conversation between Salembier and a fellow syndicalist who are discussing the overzealous antics of some of the younger members insisting on displaying the red flag at union meetings:

> ---Quand donc comprendront-ils que c'est leur volonté seule qui peut déterminer un état de choses nouveau et non la couleur d'une étoffe inutile?
> [...]
> ---Ils sont quelques-uns qui parlent toujours de la révolution; mais la révolution, c'est en chacun d'eux, en chacun de nous qu'elle se doit d'abord accomplir. Que les individus modifient

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.234.
2. E.Bonnemère's Histoires des paysans, 2 volumes, Sandoz et Fischbacker, Paris.

> leur entendement, développent leur volonté agissante, et l'état de choses nouveau s'établira de lui-même... [1].

The absence---common to most of Guillaumin's writing---of any trace of peasant dialect serves here to emphasise the rarefied atmosphere which he has created where neither characters nor situation provide the illusion of verisimilitude achieved by his earlier peasant novels like La Vie d'un simple and Près du sol.

Le Syndicat de Baugignoux is less a novel than a treatise defending the principle of syndicalism and Guillaumin's particular experiment in the Bourbonnais. Based on the intense political activity of the period 1905 to 1911 rather than the author's general peasant background, the novel's sphere of reference is too limited and the experience too immediate. Despite Guillaumin's disavowals, it is difficult to see Syndicat as anything but thinly disguised autobiography in which the benefits of hindsight are excluded. The bitterness and pessimism about the peasants' future are unmistakable, and in this respect Vernois is correct in the distinction he draws with Zola. The novel provides a useful indication of the writer's general state of mind on the brink of the First World War and helps to explain his change from novelist to journalist after 1918. His sense of being betrayed by his own class was compounded, as Roger Mathé makes clear in his work on Guillaumin, by violent attacks by both peasants and bourgeois factions after Syndicat was published. The landowners were frightened by the political nature of Salembier while, paradoxically, a group of militant workers condemned Guillaumin for stopping short of recommending violence to change the

1. Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.262.

social order. [1.] He had originally intended his novels to educate and to lead to a greater sense of class unity among the workers. This in turn, he was convinced, would hasten social and economic reform. Confronted with undeniable failure he lost faith in the novel as the appropriate medium through which to achieve his ends. When he could return to writing after the War he abandoned the form forever and began a career in journalism where he continued his campaign for peasant rights until his death in 1951.

1. See Roger Mathé, Emile Guillaumin, l'homme de la terre et l'homme de lettres, p.420.


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Eugène Le Roy: Biographical Summary.

Victor-Gabriel-Eugène Le Roy, whom Emile Guillaumin considered "sans conteste le précurseur et le maître dans le genre où nous nous essayons" [1.] was born on 29 November 1836 at the Château d'Hautefort (Périgord). He was the son of two servants in the employ of the baron Damas. His mother, descended from a line of domestics at the château, was employed as a laundress and maid, while the father "occupait à la fois les fonctions de valet de chambre, de régisseur et d'homme de confiance de M. le baron." [2.] The nature of their duties making it impossible to keep the boy with them, his parents lodged him with a local peasant wetnurse, Charlotte Charriéras. Although by strict definition not born to the peasant class, Le Roy spent his early years as one of them and his knowledge of real privation was genuine and not experienced at one remove like that of Guillaumin. Pauline Newman, in her eulogistic volume on Le Roy, stresses the hardship of the early years to explain the lifelong sympathy he felt for the rural workers and their importance in his literary work: "L'humble masure protégeait à peine les habitants, les soirs d'orage, contre le vent qui s'engouffrait dans la cheminée et faisait claquer la porte du grenier [...] L'âme de l'enfant s'est éveillée

1. Roger Mathé (ed.), Cent dix-neuf lettres d'Emile Guillaumin: 1894-1951, p.67. Letter dated 30 September 1907 to Edouard Droz. We have already seen that Guillaumin's masterpiece, La Vie d'un simple (1904), was inspired by a reading of Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant (1900) and that Guillaumin had abandoned plans for a final novel, Les Mailles du réseau, because he considered that the other author's L'Ennemi de la mort (1912) had anticipated the work.

2. Marcel Puybonnieux, Le Dernier Ami des croquants, Limoges 1934, p.9.

très tôt au contact des réalités dures et tangibles." [1] It was here that Le Roy learnt to speak the peasant dialect which was later to play a major part in forging his peculiar literary style. He visited his parents every Sunday, at Christmas and other major festivals but spent most of his time exploring the Périgord countryside. It was research which, when older, Le Roy would continue in more academic and systematic manner and which accounts for the significant role the Dordogne region plays in all the novels.

Like his admirer Guillaumin, Le Roy was an autodidact whose later enthusiasm for literature was supported by the briefest of formal educations. In 1844, when he was seven years old, he was sent to the village school in Hautefort which was run by a congregation of teaching brothers. He remained there until 1848 when he entered another ecclesiastical school in Périgueux where his parents intended him to study for the priesthood. Two years was enough for him to realise that he had no vocation, and in 1851 he left for Paris where he was placed as a commis épicier in a shop in the rue Saint-Honoré. Underpaid and severely overworked, he experienced here for the first time the urban variety of 'la vie laborieuse'. Le Roy's experience with formal education had been short, but throughout his life he conserved a respect for academic learning and shared Guillaumin's conviction ---in direct opposition to Mistral---that popular education was desirable. It was not to be used, however, to encourage material ambitions which would attract workers to the cities. The role of education was to reinforce their commitment to the land by giving them improved knowledge of technological skills and, much more importantly, an appreciation of their common history.

1. Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, Paris 1957, p.22.

Le Roy began his military service on 3 July 1854 when he enlisted with the "4e régiment de chasseurs à cheval" and returned to civilian status in 1860 when he took employment as "surnuméraire des contributions indirectes" and in 1863 he was appointed "percepteur". By both upbringing and family background working class, for the rest of his life he remained in this meagrely remunerated post of provincial tax collector, apart from a brief reinlistment with the Army during the Franco-Prussian War. [1.] He was released on 8 March 1871 and resumed his job until his retirement in 1902 when he settled in Montignac. By occupation he was part of that petit salariat to which Charles-Louis Philippe and Lucien Jean belonged. By temperament, however, he remained attached to the peasantry with whom he was well acquainted and who provided the subject for most of his fictional work. He adapted the demands of his employment to the advantage of this interest in the workers, using his frequent travels around the region to observe the conditions of the peasantry and to supplement this first hand experience with study in the various regional archives.

In 1877 he was married to Maria Peyronnet in a civil ceremony, the couple having already produced a child three years earlier. [2.] Uncompromisingly anticlerical, his refusal ---scandalous for the epoch---to be married in the Church surprised no one who knew him and the birth of the son helps explain the recurring apology in his novels for both natural law and illegitimacy. As he later admitted---with particular reference to Le Moulin du Frau---he wrote primarily for his

1. He enlisted on 4 December 1870 with the "Franc-Tireurs de la Dordogne" and saw action with the "Eclaireurs Algériens" in North Africa, which he described in Mademoiselle de la Ralphie (1921).

2. Hubert-Yvon-Laurent Le Roy who was born on 29 October 1874 at Toulouse.

own pleasure, although with the hope that his work might serve to instruct the people about their native Dordogne. Like Guillaumin he considered an educated peasantry desirable, although his faith lay more in preaching traditional values than in any contemporary notions of collective action. He suffered a disadvantage common to all working class writers, especially those who lived outside Paris; namely, the difficulty of having their work published. Too poor to defray the necessary costs, Le Roy consigned his finished manuscripts to a cupboard in his study. Attempts to write poetry failed, although he fared better with journalism, having a series of articles---united in their anticlericalism---printed in local newspapers between 1879 and 1885. [1.] He also managed to have published two short studies, fruits of his labours in the regional archives, which reflected his interest in provincial history: La Société populaire de Montignac pendant la révolution 1793-1794 [2.] and Recherches sur l'origine et la valeur des particules des noms dans l'ancien comté de Montignac en Périgord. [3.] Two other similar works, however, remained unedited. [4.]

1. For details of these minor writings, see Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, Bordeaux 1929, pp.32-33.

2. Subtitled "Procès-Verbaux des séances publiés avec des notes et des éclaircissements par Eug. Le Roy, percepteur des amendes à Bordeaux", Imprimerie du Sud-Ouest, Bordeaux 1888.

3. Imprimerie du Sud-Ouest, Bordeaux 1889.

4. Notice sur une branche naturelle de la maison d'Hautefort and Annales de la Révolution à Montignac. Guillaumie mentions another manuscript, finished in 1901, entitled Histoire critique du christianisme. (See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.149 n.)

Given the personal bond Le Roy felt with his native Périgord and his increasing study of the region, his affiliation with the Félibrige in 1901 was a logical step. The movement, founded in 1854, had originated in Provence with Mistral and six other poets who had as their objective the encouragement of Provencal culture and the standardisation of its language. It formed part of a wider movement of 'regionalist' literature which had been developing since the third decade of the century. By that time Romanticism had encouraged a sense of regional identity by introducing into literature---through Lamartine, Béranger and George Sand---the figure of l'homme du peuple. With the peasant character came his colourful idiom which a new generation of writers wanted to exploit in order to breathe life into a language stagnating in the norms set by the Classicists of the grand siècle. The collapse of the Second Republic provided a further stimulus for the regionalists in their opposition to the new regime's determination to consolidate its power by concentrating it in Paris. [1] Centralisation of political and economic life in the capital, "[...] oeuvre commune de la Royauté, de la Révolution, de l'Empire et de tous les régimes qui se succédèrent au XIX^{e} siècle," [2] inevitably resulted in a centralisation of cultural activity. Part of

1. Among those liberal idealists disillusioned by the coup d'état was George Sand, one of whose "Lettres au peuple" in 1848 had exhorted all Frenchmen to "chercher ensemble et trouver la Vérité sociale". Since her break with Musset she had increasingly interested herself in "la peine des „prolétaires„, à la misère des travailleurs et à leurs espoirs." (Edouard Dolléans, Féminisme et le mouvement ouvrier: George Sand, Paris 1951, p.xiv.) After the fall of the Republic, however, she abandoned the Christian socialism of such works as Le Compagnon du Tour de France (1840) and Le Meunier d'Angibault (1845) and began to concentrate more on psychological analysis.
2. Christian Sénéchal, Les Grands Courants de la littérature française contemporaine, Paris 1941, p.80.

the government's policy was to impose French as the national language at the expense of regional dialects. Reaction among the regionalists was immediate, and the Félibrige was established in 1854. Although originally limited to Provence, the movement inspired similar organisations in other French provinces, including Périgord. The new branch, called Le Bournat (viz. "la ruche") du Périgord, was founded in the foyer of the Périgueux theatre on 10 November 1901 when Auguste Chastanet was acclaimed president. Six days later sixteen trustees were elected, one of whom was Eugène Le Roy. [1] Among the articles of the branch's constitution were provisions to ensure the survival of the Périgord dialect. These included:

> 1. La purification méthodique du dialecte périgordin et son enrichissement.
> 2. La réforme de sa graphie par l'adoption des règles posées par Mistral. [2]

Le Roy soon realised that, however admirable such aims to guarantee Périgord culture, adherence to the principles would impose intolerable restrictions on his writing, and the following year he withdrew from the association.

Although he had been writing in his leisure time since the mid 1870's Le Roy, who remains best known in France for

1. For a fuller discussion of the movement in Périgord see A. Dujarric-Descombes, "Le Félibrige en Périgord", La Grande Revue, 1 February 1907, pp.280-287. The relationship between character and dialect in Périgord is examined by Alfred de Tarde in his article, "L'Ame et la langue périgourdine", La Grande Revue, 16 January 1907, pp.187-192. For a short glossary of Périgord/French expressions, see also Yvon Delbos, "Un Romancier de la Terre, Eugène Le Roy", Mercure de France, 15 September 1927, p.522.
2. See Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.63.

his Jacquou le croquant, might have remained unknown but for a fortuitous incident in 1891. Alcide Dusolier---senator for the Dordogne, literary critic and former secretary to Gambetta ---bought a copy of L'Avenir de la Dordogne while waiting between trains in a remote rural station. In it he found an instalment of Le Roy's Le Moulin du Frau which was published serially between 2 April and 21 August. He was impressed by the quality of the prose and immediately went to Hautefort where Le Roy was living at the time. In the course of the resulting interview with the novelist the senator was shown the cupboard full of manuscripts Le Roy could not afford to have published. [1] Dusolier's enthusiasm for his new discovery prompted him to take responsibility for them and immediately upon his return to Paris his influence was employed to have Moulin accepted by Dreyfous and Dalsace and Jacquou by La Revue de Paris.

If Le Roy had been penniless when Dusolier first met him, his published writings quickly altered his financial situation. Both Moulin and Jacquou met with immediate success, Ganderax advancing the novelist 4,000 francs for the serial publication of Jacquou in his Revue de Paris. The author's own reaction was cool to the point of indifference and he exhibited no desire to consolidate his reputation by increased production. He discouraged one German editor who wanted authorisation to translate the novels, insisting that they had a distinctive Périgord flavour and would not interest the Germans. Daniel Halévy, after a visit to the novelist, confirmed that, "/Le Roy/ n'aime pas la production forcée, qui n'est pas toujours mesurée sur la

1. For a further description of this encounter see Armand Got, "Pour bien comprendre Eugène Le Roy", Europe, May 1957, p.18.

verve de l'écrivain, mais la vie qu'il faut gagner, sur le renom qu'il faut acquérir vite." [1].

In the case of the German it is likely that Le Roy's refusal was less the result of a rather eccentric professionalism than of his intense dislike of all things Teutonic. In order to understand his novels it is essential to appreciate that the single most important facet of Le Roy's character was his patriotism and he could never forgive the annexation of Alsace and Lorraine. For him patriotism meant Republicanism, and he considered the dates 1789, 1830 and 1848 the most important in modern French history. Anything that threatened the Republican ideal was attacked both in his journalistic writings and, at greater length, in his novels. Seen in this light, his hostility towards the aristocracy, capitalistic bourgeoisie and the legitimist Church was inevitable. His hostility also extended, however, to include Napoleon Bonaparte. Unlike the majority of the working class who cherished the légende napoléonienne, Le Roy regarded the First Empire as a betrayal of the Revolutionary ideals.

Of what the Republican virtues were he was very clear. Honesty, justice and civic pride were absolutes and the family unit was held inviolable. Husbands were to be strong and considerate, wives industrious and fertile and children obedient. "No man could be a good revolutionary without virtue" wrote Richard Cobb and, indeed, Le Roy conformed exactly to Cobb's conception of the ideal specimen. [2]. The moral emphasis of his

1. Quoted by Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, pp.20-21.

2. See Richard Cobb, "The Revolutionary Mentality in France", first published in History, no.146, October 1957 and included in Cobb's volume A Second Identity: Essays on France and French History, Oxford University Press 1969, p.131.

thought was strengthened by his knowledge of the stoics whose writings, with those of the classical humanists and the Evangelists, were his preferred reading. In a letter to Dusolier he once wrote that, "Lorsque le coeur me lève, je me réfugie dans le passé, c'est la ressource de ceux qui sont impuissants à changer la marche des choses. Je prends un de ces vieux amis que j'ai toujours sous la main: Plutarque, Tacite, Epictète, Marc-Aurèle, notre bon Montaigne et je me sens rasséréné." [1] Le Roy's will, addressed directly to his children, made clear the idealism which in true patriarchal manner he intended to impress upon his descendants. Among the provisions was a stipulation that there should be no flowers at his burial and no religious ceremony: "[...] Qu'on jette un drapeau tricolore sur mon cercueil, sans plus [...] Si mes enfants étaient obligés un jour de vendre les livres, qu'ils gardent Plutarque, Tacite et Montaigne [...] Soyez forts, bons et généreux; aimez les petits, les humbles, les faibles et défendez-les autant que vous le pourrez. Aimez la France, notre chère patrie et soyez-lui dévoués jusqu'à la mort; en elle, vous aimerez l'humanité." [2] His fictional characters, however---like Guillaumin's Salembier---would appear less philosophical and more activist in their approach to contemporary social injustice.

The royalties from Moulin and Jacquou permitted Le Roy to retire from his post as percepteur in 1902, at the age of of sixty-four, and devote his remaining years to writing. After his discovery by Dusolier in 1891 he had published four

1. Quoted by Armand Got in his article "Pour bien comprendre Eugène Le Roy", Europe, May 1957, p.18.

2. See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.148.

other novels, all except the posthumous Mademoiselle de la Ralphie (1921) concerned with the rural community. In 1905 he declined the cross of the Légion d'Honneur for Jacquou le croquant, undoubtedly as much out of disdain for the founder of the order as his often expressed aversion to honours of any sort: "[...] Mes principes sont invariables," he wrote to Dusolier, "je suis un vieux solitaire d'abord, un vieux républicain ensuite; pas de décoration, tel est mon voeu formel." [1] Surrounded by his family, he died on 6 May 1907 at Montignac and was laid to rest beneath a tricolour in accordance with his wishes.

1. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.23. Compare these remarks by the narrator of Le Moulin du Frau about the growing trade in medals under the Second Empire: "Jamais, au grand jamais, on n'a vu tant de gens décorés qu'au jour d'aujourd'hui. Ceux qui n'ont pas la chance d'accrocher la croix d'honneur française, se jettent sur ces croix étrangères, dont on tient boutique [...] Il semble que nous soyons, non pas des citoyens, des hommes libres, mais des écoliers à qui on distribue des récompenses, s'ils sont bien sages." (Le Moulin du Frau, Dreyfous et Dalsace, Paris 1894, pp.525-526.)

Eugène Le Roy: Preliminary Observations.

In formulating a critical approach to Le Roy many commentators identified his relationship to the line of revolutionary or free thought as it had developed in France. If not always in style then certainly in their humanist orientation, Le Roy's novels perpetuate the rationalist tradition of the philosophes which had been essential to the 1789 Revolution. Guy Lavaud went further back to connect the novelist with two of his Périgord compatriots: with Montaigne, by "[...] une bonhomie qui, surtout à l'egard des choses de la religion, n'est pas exempte de malice et de moquerie" and with La Boétie, by "un esprit frondeur et révolutionnaire, l'amour d'indépendance et de la liberté." [1] Yvon Delbos, deputy for the Dordogne and former Minister of Education, confirmed Le Roy's descent from the Encyclopaedists and suggested more modern equivalents. He identified in Le Roy a "souffle de révolte" based on egalitarian ideals "[...] qui l'apparentent [...], plus près de nous, à Hugo, à Michelet, à Tolstoï." [2] In all his work the author's revolutionary zeal is evident, if in varying degrees and under different forms. Anticlericalism and a strong moral sense of civic duty combine with the Rousseauesque concept of a campagne purificatrice to provide a broad frame of reference in which to examine the novels. These are not, however, merely the products of a single mould, and convey the flexibility in Le Roy's approach to composition. Three categories suggest themselves and will

1. Guy Lavaud, "L'Epopée paysanne et les romans d'Eugène Le Roy", La Nouvelle Revue, 1 September 1910, pp.57-58.

2. Yvon Delbos, "Un Romancier de la terre, Eugène Le Roy", Mercure de France, 15 September 1927, p.530.

be adopted for the purposes of this thesis. The first comprises what Lavaud identified as "l'épopée paysanne" (Le Moulin du Frau, Jacquou le croquant), the second being the romans de moeurs which record the minutiae in the life of the rural community (Nicette et Milou, Les Gens d'Auberoque) and the third consists of Le Roy's two posthumously published novels, L'Ennemi de la mort and Mademoiselle de la Ralphie.

If Le Roy was intensely interested in the politics of his age, especially as they fostered or diminished the Republican ideal, it is not surprising that each of his novels is firmly rooted in an historical context. Precise dates for the action are often given and the repercussions of events beyond the limits of Périgord are allowed to influence the characters in even the remotest reaches of the province, rescuing them from the purely parochial interest typical of truly 'regionalist' writing. The historical setting is not confined to that of the author himself, as Le Roy relied not only on personal experience but also on the recollections of neighbours, parents and grandparents to make credible the historical content of his writing. Le Moulin du Frau spans the years from the end of Louis-Philippe to the Third Republic, Jacquou and Nicette et Milou the Restoration and July Monarchy, Les Gens d'Auberoque the Second Empire and the beginning of the Third Republic, L'Ennemi de la mort the Restoration and Mademoiselle de la Ralphie the well defined interval between 1835 and 1849. The reader having finished all six of the novels emerges with a general impression of nineteenth century history as lived by the petites gens of a particular province in France.

Gaston Guillaumie contended that Le Roy's sense of history replaced the imaginative capacity for inventing plot and

character, and that armed with his notes and the reminiscences of others he modelled his novels on stories which had, in a manner of speaking, already been told. [1.] Marcel Puybonnieux placed so little value on the author's powers of invention that his biography, Le Dernier Ami des croquants, tells the story of Le Roy's life in terms of characters and situations drawn from the novels. Both critics exaggerate an autobiographical element which, undoubtedly there, never determines the composition of the works. Certain parallels are obvious, including the use of names and descriptions of Périgord villages and, especially in Moulin, the countryside near Montignac, the Château de Nansac in Jacquou and the young hero's vagabond existence in the hills, and the recurring theme of bâtardise. [2.] This last element was, as suggested above, both the fictional representation of his son's birth and an expression of his own contempt for the Church's teaching on marriage. A more intimate explanation offers itself in the rumours---never substantiated and always hotly denied by Le Roy---that the novelist's father had been no less a personage than the baron Damas himself. The contention, however, that Le Roy's novels are mere illustrated autobiography cannot be entertained seriously. There is a limit to the literary use to which personal and solicited recollections may be put. Even if the possibility were conceded that the more 'static' works like Moulin or Les Gens d'Auberoque were impressionistic portraits of the rural community as the author knew it, the highly episodic, romantic---and in the case of Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, bizarre---nature of the others cannot permit

1. See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, pp.78 ff.

2. No fewer than six of the novels' main characters are presented as enfants naturels: Nancy (Le Moulin du Frau), Lina (Jacquou le croquant), the eponymous heroes of Nicette et Milou, Sylvia (L'Ennemi de la mort) and Damase (Mademoiselle de la Ralphie).

this to be the general approach.

That Le Roy chose to set the action of four of the six novels in the first half of the nineteenth century shows a willingness to attempt historical narrative which, by its very nature, is imaginative. In this respect he was undoubtedly influenced by his study of the history of the period and of the general trend towards overpopulation in the countryside during the first decades of the century. As Jean Vidalenc makes clear in his Société française de 1815 à 1848, this increase had the effect of making more stringent, by the law of supply and demand, the conditions landowners could impose upon their tenants. [1.] The opposite of this situation was generally true in the second half of the century when the population shift was towards the cities and it is no coincidence, therefore, that Le Roy's most revolutionary works---Jacquou le croquant in particular---are distanced from the author and set firmly in the early years of the century.

Le Roy was as deeply concerned as Guillaumin about the depopulation of the countryside, and both authors used it as a recurring theme in their novels. Le Roy, however, tended to emphasise the virtues of returning to or remaining on the land (Le Moulin du Frau, Jacquou le croquant) while Guillaumin depicted the disaster awaiting those who abandoned it (Albert Manceau, adjudant, Baptiste et sa femme). The role given to Nature is an important one in all Le Roy's novels, and especially in the peasant epics. His Année rustique en Périgord, following the rhythmic change of seasons, depends upon it for form as well as the visual images in this eulogy on the harmony that exists

1. Vol.I, "Le peuple des campagnes", Paris 1970, p.358.

between the labourer and the elements. [1.] Rousseau was the single most important influence on Le Roy's conception of the rural community and it is impossible to read the novels without detecting the moral significance given it and borrowed direct from the Swiss writer.

In theme and style Le Roy owed much to the Realist tradition, but he was on the whole unwilling to describe the less attractive aspects of the peasant nature as Guillaumin did. Although a developing pessimism in the very last years of his life produced in L'Ennemi de la mort a more critical approach to the subject, in the great majority of his work the 'natural' life in the countryside is identified with everything good and all other influences are seen as evil. The heroes of his peasant novels especially are, as Pauline Newman remarked, "fils spirituels de Rousseau." [2.] What minor faults he did

1. L'Année rustique en Périgord, Imprimerie Générale du Sud-Ouest (J. Castanet), Bergerac 1906. First published in the Petit Centre, Limoges (21 November 1903-7 June 1904) this short work of 106 pages adopts for its chapter titles the names of the twelve months of the Revolutionary calendar. The work is overtly didactic in that it includes many of the author's suggestions for land reform and the improvement of peasant working conditions. The frequently aphoristic style and rhetorically utilitarian statements suggest the influence of Michelet as well as Rousseau: "La nature a livré la terre à l'universalité des hommes pour en user dans la mesure de leurs besoins." (p.103.) "Nul ne peut posséder plus de terre qu'il n'en peut mettre directement en rapport, lui et les siens habitant sous son toit." (p.104.) "La terre n'est pas une marchandise, un objet de luxe, de gloriole, de pur agrément, ni un moyen d'influence pour les riches, c'est une demeure, un chantier de travail et un moyen de subsistance pour tous." (p.105.)

2. Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.167.

perceive in the rural subject were due to the corrupting influence of man's law and would disappear were the natural law absolute. Buttressed by his admiration for the classical humanists, this vision of the social order distinguishes Le Roy from his successor Guillaumin who was always willing to incorporate the best urban society had to offer in technological and educational improvements to advance the cause of the peasantry. Even more does it indicate his difference from the greatest bourgeois rivals in the genre, Balzac and Zola. His tendency towards idealisation separates Le Roy's characters from the scheming rogues in Les Paysans as much as a puritanical approach to sexual matters ensures the gulf between them and the rutting peasants of La Terre. In his volume on Le Roy, Gaston Guillaumie identified this general trend in the novels but understated the extent to which, with the exception of the final works, they were purged of the unsavoury details of country life: "Ordinairement, Le Roy n'aime pas à décrire les mauvais instincts et les passions viles; non pas qu'il les écarte systématiquement de son oeuvre; il a trop le souci de la vérité et il est trop bon observateur pour n'écrire que des oeuvres fades et sans exactitude. Mais c'est à regret qu'il montre l'envers de l'âme humaine." [1.] Paul Vernois struck a better balance when he observed that, "Périodiquement comme un leitmotiv, une note pessimiste vient assombrir l'évocation joyeuse d'un folklore admiré. Mais en fait le coeur parle plus haut que la tête et il ne s'agit là que de disparates dans un concert de louanges bien ordonnées à l'adresse de la vie paysanne." [2.]

1. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.95.
2. Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.157.

The fact is that the novelist does indeed create a 'system' based upon a personal philosophical outlook and sacrifices thereby vérité psychologique to a higher---and didactic---imperative. It can still be true, of course, that descriptive detail is used extensively to produce a realistic framework for the action but the message which emerges from the novels is a visionary one. Guillaumie admits as much in a later---and apparently self-contradictory---comment on the works: "Presque toujours apparaît le parti pris, vraiment trop visible, de faire du paysan et du pauvre les représentants du bien, tandis que les riches, les faux nobles, les bourgeois figurent le mal." [1] Guy Lavaud, who wrote of Le Roy's oeuvre "[...] qu'il faut la placer bien au-dessus de celles déjà belles d'Emmanuel Delbousquet et d'Emile Guillaumin [...]", was one commentator whose admiration for the author did not impair his critical judgment. Although writing before the publication of either L'Ennemi de la mort or Mademoiselle de la Ralphie and despite the notable exceptions of Galibert and Boral in Jacquou, his reservation that Le Roy's prejudice appears "trop visible" is valid: "Dans la société que peint le romancier, il devait bien en être ainsi, mais les exceptions qui pourraient confirmer la règle, il semble que l'écrivain les ait écartées avec un soin jaloux, et l'on pourrait voir là une lointaine influence de Jean-Jacques Rousseau." [2]

A tendency towards the idyllic and a strong identification with his native Périgord posed a potential threat to Le Roy's claim to be a writer of widespread appeal. "L'encadrement

1. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.165.

2. Guy Lavaud, "L'Epopée paysanne et les romans d'Eugène Le Roy", La Nouvelle Revue, 1 September 1910, p.56.

historique de ses romans", wrote Pauline Newman, "son souci du paysage, ses travaux d'érudit, son usage du patois, sa façon de cataloguer la faune et la flore du Périgord, de ressusciter les vieilles légendes, témoignent d'une conscience provinciale, et l'apparentent malgré lui, au mouvement général de l'époque." [1]. The temptation to follow the regionalists into an apology for hermetic provincialism was strong and, as we have seen, Le Roy did associate himself---if briefly---with the Félibrige. Regionalist characteristics abound in all of the novels and many serve to enhance them. Accurate and comprehensive description of Périgord topography place the action in credible---and in the case the "forêt Barade" in Jacquou, historically colourful---setting. Local customs and superstitions are depicted, and when Le Roy does not dwell excessively on them they further a sense of authenticity. His interest in preserving the historical legacy of the region results, however, in occasional interruptions to the narrative for lengthy expositions on some purely local point of interest Le Roy had researched on his travels around the province. Such lacunae are unevenly dispersed throughout the body of his work and will be mentioned as they arise in our discussion of the novels.

Despite the assertion, which was based more on patriotic than aesthetic grounds, in Le Roy's reply to the German editor that his novels were too 'regional', he was on the whole successful in moderating an enthusiasm for things périgordin which was natural to him. One has only to compare L'Année rustique en Périgord with the novels to appreciate the extent to which Le Roy checked himself. In L'Année, writing in his

1. Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.171.

own name and not under the assumed guise of a peasant, he could allow an exuberance of the visually picturesque. In the novels whose narrator is himself a worker, however, Le Roy considered it unrealistic to credit him with the sensibilities of a writer, and usually succeeded in limiting the extent to which the picturesque was allowed to enter. "Le roman des us et des coutumes affectionnés", observed Vernois, "décrits avec un plaisir évident ne s'enferme pourtant pas dans un pittoresque gratuit. Il conduit à l'étude des moeurs et plus généralement des catégories et des types sociaux." [1.]

His concern to reconcile style with narrative viewpoint forced him to confront the question of the use of dialect. To what degree could the author's extensive knowledge of the regional dialect be employed without alienating the reading public? Even if Le Roy claimed that, apart from his own amusement, he wrote only for the edification of his compatriots, he had to admit that those who could read were schooled in the national and not the regional language. If the provincial idiom were to make any appearance some form of compromise was clearly necessary. This problem was, of course, most acute in first person narratives like Le Moulin du Frau and Jacquou le croquant, but even when an omniscient third person viewpoint was adopted there remained a decision to take about the quantity and form of dialogue to be used.

It has already been noted that Le Roy's brief affiliation with the félibres was terminated because he questioned the wisdom of the exclusive use of provincial speech. It must also be pointed out that despite Le Roy's own statements about his "peasant novels" and repeated critical reference to the épopées

1. Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.165.

paysannes, none of his works treats the peasantry as its central subject. True, peasant characters are usually present at the periphery of the action and the setting is always---with the exception of Mademoiselle de la Ralphie---rustic. The true heroes are drawn, however, from the ranks of other rural workers: millers, charcoal burners, pedlars or, in the case of Jacquou, simple renegades. "Le véritable paysan au travail", wrote Vernois, "peut-être parce qu'il a trop de préoccupations pour bavarder ou discuter l'intéresse peu." [1.]

It matters little whether the idiom in question originates among the peasants or their compatriots. Apart from a specialised vocabulary, or argot, peculiar to their several occupations, all shared the regional dialect which Le Roy himself learned and spoke as a child. The problem remained how unobtrusively to integrate the 'foreign' element into the French narrative. Marc Ballot considered Le Roy's success a direct result of his first hand knowledge of the linguistic material; knowledge which spared him "ces bizarres expériences de laboratoire grammatical" which had seriously flawed the romans champêtres of both Balzac and George Sand. [2.] This in itself could not be enough to guarantee a happy synthesis of the two elements, the natural temptation being to overload the narrative with borrowings from the dialect. Although Le Roy's success in this experiment is not uniform, on the whole he manages to insert carefully chosen examples from the regional idiom without breaking either the rhythm or the sense of the French. The reader assimilates the patois almost unconsciously,

1. Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, p.173.

2. See Marc Ballot, "La Place d'Eugène Le Roy dans la littérature française", Europe, May 1957, p.25.

deducing meaning from context, and is given the illusion of reading an authentic peasant text. This impression is heightened by the use of images and metaphors which, although rendered in French, are taken from the langue populaire. [1] Individual examples of Le Roy's technique will be pointed out as the novels are discussed. One final observation implicit in the above-mentioned use of metaphor should be made about Le Roy's method of linguistic accommodation. He consistently uses gallicised forms of idiomatic words and phrases as the alternative to inserting the original dialectal forms. This has obvious advantages for the French reader and reduces the chances of the writing acquiring the linguistic bombast of most regionalist literature. Again, illustrations of this last technique will be given as they apply to the novels under consideration. Gaston Guillaumie in his volume on Le Roy supplies an excellent representative glossary of such terms, however, which deserves to be reproduced at length in these general remarks on style: "On rencontre [...] dans la prose de Le Roy, des expressions comme „je t'espère„ dans le sens périgordin de „je t'attends„, les cloches „campanent„; son „quite„ chien; il était rasé „manque„ deux petits favoris; „couler„ par une rue; tu te trompes de „guère„; les gens de „leur renvers„, etc. et des adjectifs à sens tres spécial dans le parler périgordin: un „crâne„ vin; un „méchant„ signe; un drole qui est „fier„ ou qui est „dru„, et surtout des tournures de phrases entières qui sont calquées sur le syntaxe même du patois: „pour qui me prends-tu, que tu veuilles...?„; „je me suis pensé„; „il s'en est pris„; je ne l'avais pas „de coutume„; je t'en porterai des sabots, „mais que„ je vende mes oiseaux...„" [2]

1. For specific examples see Gaston Guillaumie, Eugene Le Roy, romancier perigordin, pp.109-110.

2. Ibid., p.108.

Le Moulin du Frau.

Eugène Le Roy owes his surviving literary reputation in France to the first two novels he published: Le Moulin du Frau (1894) and Jacquou le croquant (1900). The latter brought him considerable financial success and both remain Le Roy's greatest achievement in his ambition to capture in the novel the countryside and peuple of Périgord. The subject matter developed in Le Moulin and Jacquou derives directly from working class life in the province and they possess a stylistic unity and singleness of theme lacking in his other works. The author confronted the problems of narrative viewpoint and language common to all writers about the proletariat who found themselves the medium between the general reading public and a class both inarticulate and unknown. Le Roy's other works, introducing themes not exclusively relevant to the proletarian novel, raise few new points about the nature of working class literature not already encountered in Le Moulin and Jacquou. For this reason these two novels provide a good introduction to the literature produced for the rural proletariat between 1890 and 1914 and deserve a degree of detailed examination that the other works do not warrant.

Written over the period of three years between 1888-1890, the first of Le Roy's two peasant epics appeared serially in L'Avenir de la Dordogne between 2 April and 21 August 1891 and was published in one volume by Dreyfous & Delsace (Paris) in 1894. [1].

Although in a strict sense not about the peasantry at all,

1. The following are the subsequent editions of Le Moulin du Frau: Castanet (Bergerac) 1895; Fasquelle (Paris) 1905; Mornay (Paris) 1927; Nelson (Paris) 1937; Fasquelle (Paris) 1954; Livre Club Diderot (Paris) 1972 (with Jacquou le croquant, Les Gens d'Auberoque and Nicette et Milou; Hallier (Paris) 1979.

the action does unfold in a country setting and the rural proletariat make periodic incursions into the life of the central characters. The novel is subtitled, "Histoire du meunier Hélie Nogaret racontée par lui-même"; a novel, therefore, about a humble---but independent---rural worker. Using Péguy's distinction, the hero may be "pauvre" but is certainly not one of the "misérables" represented by itinerant or sharecropping peasants who possess nothing of value but their labour.

As the subtitle indicates, Le Moulin du Frau is the retrospective, first person narrative of the central character, Hélie. The plot is negligible as there is little in the way of dramatic incident. The pattern is set, with few exceptions, by events in a worker's life and little attempt is made to discriminate between major and minor ones. Life on the whole follows the rhythmic pattern of the seasons and the cycle of birth, marriage and death. Hélie's age at the time of recounting the story is sixty-two. The beginning of the action is precisely dated at 1844 when he is sixteen and on a visit to his uncle's mill at Frau. Sicaire is the middle-aged, hard-working and ferociously independent mentor of the young Hélie whose own father has died. The miller's uncompromising republicanism is the major influence on the boy who will develop in the course of the novel into a mirror image of his uncle. The visit to Frau permits the boy to savour the healthy environment of the countryside before he returns to his mother and Périgueux where he is to take up a clerkship at the Préfecture. He has little enthusiasm for the prospect but undertakes it out of a sense of filial duty. His mother, a typical working class woman, believes her son well placed in the security of the civil service. Hélie spends several years in this office and comes

thoroughly to detest its stuffy, unhealthy atmosphere. His mother's early death releases him from any obligation to remain and he readily accepts his uncle's invitation to return to the country and work at the mill.

Once he is established there, the novel settles in to chronicle the unspectacular events which follow from his decision to become a miller. His courtship and marriage to Nancy, a local farmer's daughter, and the subsequent production of children provide the inevitable framework for the telling of his own family story. Due attention is given to Sicaire's importance in the family circle, culminating in one of the very rare dramatic crises in the novel: his arrest by the local gendarmerie following the coup d'état of 2nd December. The marriage of Hélie's daughter, his son's enlistment in the army and the eventual death of the uncle mark the more important events in this unfolding autobiography. Occasionally life beyond the mill intrudes to refresh the insular narrative. Sometimes it takes the form of news of political events in the capital. More often, and more interestingly, it amounts to little more than snatches of local gossip. The escapades of a local priest, for example, provide comic relief when it is discovered that the 'niece' with whom he is living is no blood relative at all.

The novel has no dénouement as it has no central crisis, and the narrative follows naturally the chronology of the miller's life until the final stage is reached where the old man is set to write his story.

Le Moulin du Frau attracted no immediate critical response of any substance. This may be seen as the result both of the

obscurity of author and subject and of an excessive use of Périgord dialect which made the novel difficult for all but the most persistent reader. After the turn of the century, however, sales of the book improved once the author's reputation had finally been established by the success of Jacquou and Fasquelle had published a revised edition (1905) in which the local patois intruded less. In her sympathetic study of Le Roy, Pauline Newman saw the work as part of the rebirth of the historical novel in the provinces towards the end of the nineteenth century; a rebirth which occurred despite "une sorte de renouveau du classicisme à Paris." [1.] It formed part of the regionalists' response to the increasing forces of centralisation which had been at work throughout the century: "Le Moulin du Frau correspondait aux besoins de l'actualité à une époque où les provinces françaises se ressaisissaient devant le danger d'une centralisation excessive." [2.]

Gaston Guillaumie was more critical of the novel although his judgement agreed with that of Newman when he acknowledged its value as a roman à thèse and approved Le Roy's timely message of a repopulation of the countryside and a halt to the search for easy wealth in the towns. "Eugène Le Roy a voulu [...] remettre en honneur la simplicité de goûts et le franc-parler de nos anciens, leurs habitudes mâles, leurs moeurs réglées, leur vie agreste, qui a fait jadis une race forte. Il n'est pas de livre meilleur pour démontrer la nécessité du retour à la terre, pour mettre en garde ceux qui la désertent contre le goût des aventures incertaines et le mirage décevant

1. Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, Nouvelles Editions Latines, Paris 1957, p.71.

2. Ibid., p.76.

de la vie citadine et de ses plaisirs illusoires." [1] The author was also admired for an ability to bring out what was picturesque in the Périgord characters while still endowing them with enough general interest to satisfy the average reader. A broad canvas of provincial life was created with each of the characters in turn---from the central Hélie and Sicaire down to the minor figures of Gustou the mill worker and Lajarthe the socialist tailor---developed in detail. "Tout le folk-lore d'une vieille province défile dans ce livre, qui, se déroulant comme un film au ralenti, ressucite une époque qui, peu à peu s'enfonce dans le temps et remonte vers l'oubli." [2]

Le Roy was, however, rightly called to account by Guillaumie for occasionally permitting fiction to give way to propaganda. In the constant attacks of Imperial politics and lack of social compassion in the Church the narrative mask often slipped to reveal the republican and anticlerical author. Whether these partis pris were delivered from the mouth of the narrator himself or emerged in the conversation of the other characters, Guillaumie recognised that they "donnent parfois au récit l'amertume regrettable d'un pamphlet." [3]

Le Moulin presents une tranche de vie from the working-class milieu of nineteenth-century Périgord. The resulting chronicle of Hélie Nogaret and his life at the mill is a marriage between a romantic attachment to the past characteristic of the historical novel then in vogue among non-Parisian writers and the insistence on provincial setting and detail

1. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, Feret & Fils, Bordeaux 1929, p.41.

2. Ibid., p.39.

3. Ibid., p.42.

demanded by the félibres. It is, in microcosm, a social history of France between 1840 and 1890 ending in the---for Le Roy, symbolic---security of the Third Republic. The author himself seems to have recognised the insular nature of Le Moulin. He admitted that, "Je me proposais seulement mon propre plaisir, et éventuellement peut-être de faire connaître à mes compatriotes de la petite patrie, les vieilles moeurs de notre province." [1.] The epigraph which heads the first chapter confirms that Le Roy viewed the work as a continuation of the regionalist tradition well established in France since the middle of the century: "Ce livre est purement Périgordin, celui qui n'aime pas l'ail, le chabrol [2.] et l'huile de noix, peut le fermer, il n'y comprendrait rien." [3.] As will be seen in a closer examination of the work the author, either consciously or through modesty, underestimated his achievement in this first novel. While the specific Périgord flavour of the work is undeniable, Le Moulin is more than a faithful transcription of the author's observation of provincial countryside and customs. The characters which fill the novel possess a literary function beyond the merely picturesque. They embody the author's own, often idealised, conception of what the peasant personality is, and in their conflict with the rich and powerful they are motivated by Le Roy's own republicanism.

The realism of the descriptions of Périgord life never disguises the symbolic quality of the finished picture. Le Roy

1. See Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.54.

2. This is a Périgord expression which recurs in Le Roy's novels and refers to the wine drunk after the peasant's meal of soup. The wine is poured into the bowl, mixed with the remains of the soup, and consumed.

3. Le Moulin du Frau, Dreyfous & Dalsace, Paris 1894, p.1.

was, as Marc Ballot wrote in his monograph, not only "le chantre, mais l'incarnation, le symbole" of his native Périgord. [1.] The extent of the elaboration of picturesque detail is determined by the narrative convention Le Roy has chosen. Trying at all times to remain faithful to the mentality of his peasant narrator, the author avoids lyrical description of the countryside. Poetic studies in form and colour of a landscape so familiar to the labourer as to pass unnoticed would be out of character and Le Roy turns his descriptive talents from the land to the unusual or unexpected circumstances more likely to make an impression on the narrator. [2.] An early description of Hélie's uncle Sicaire introduces the man, not in terms of a familiar physiognomy or speech, but rather by an account of what he wears:

> Mon oncle, lui, était habillé en meunier de drap blanc en entier; sans-culotte, gilet boutonné carrément, avec deux rangées de boutons de cuivre poli, culotte à pont-levis; tout cela était blanc, et le chapeau de feutre ras était blanc aussi. C'était un vrai chapeau périgordin, à larges bords, à calotte ronde, comme on n'en fait plus guère; les meuniers d'à-present suivent la mode. La seule chose qui ne fût pas blanche dans l'habillement de mon oncle, c'était une cravate de soie noire, nouée tout bonnement, et sur laquelle se rabattait le bord-de-cou de sa chemise en bonne toile de ménage. [3.]

The adjective "blanc" is repeated four times in the space of this brief description and the general impression Sicaire makes

1. Marc Ballot, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, Presses Universitaires de France, Paris 1949, p.309.

2. A full lyric evocation of his native province is reserved for a short work, L'Année rustique en Perigord, published in 1906. Abandoning the novel form, he writes under his own name and not that of a fictional peasant. L'Année rustique takes the form of twelve brief sketches, following the Revolutionary calendar, in which detailed description of the region and peasant activities during the various seasons is given.

3. Le Moulin du Frau, pp.11-12.

on his young nephew is one of brightness, an effect heightened by the two rows of polished copper buttons and set off by the black of the silk tie. At this point in the narrative Hélie is still living in town and the unusual aspect of his uncle's rustic dress naturally catches his eye and remains in his memory. As for the reader himself, he has been introduced to Sicaire but is left with no picture of the physical form of the man. He has merely the impression made upon the nephew.

A description which is found later in the narrative provides an example of Le Roy's talent for sketching with economy of words precise period portraits. The picture is of Nancy, Hélie's fiancée, on the day of their wedding at Frau:

> Nancy avait une robe de fin mérinos bleu qui lui découvrait un peu le cou, et la naissance de la poitrine où brillait le coeur que je lui avais donné, suspendu par une chaîne d'or. Elle avait une coiffe avec les dentelles, à l'ancienne mode périgordine, qui laissait voir deux épais bandeaux de cheveux noirs. Avec ça, de grands pendants d'oreilles, son beau châle et des petits souliers avec des rubans et c'est tout. [1].

Once again, the physical aspect of the character is ignored in favour of a description of the costume. That the old man can still recall such fine details of his fiancee's wedding apparel, including the colour of the dress and the gold of the chain, is meant to move the reader while providing him with a portrait of a typical Périgord bride at the time of the Second Republic.[2]

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.234.

2. See Marc Ballot, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, p.57. Ballot considers Le Roy's digressions into minute description as a device to capture an important element in the psychological makeup of the peasant; namely, the power of memory. The peasant being illiterate and by nature taciturn, it is "la mémoire qui est à la campagne une des facultés les mieux exercées."

Other descriptions, of place as well as dress, are interspersed throughout the novel. The best of them are capable of evoking a nostalgia for 'la France disparue' which, unlike the damage that excessive retrospection does to regionalist novels, in no way diminishes the appeal of Le Moulin for a modern reader. One such description, of the interior of a village school, evokes an aspect of rural France which has vanished, and undoubtedly had its origin in Le Roy's memories of his own early days at the school in Hautefort:

> Dans la classe [...] on n'était pas aussi bien installé qu'aujourd'hui. Trois grandes tables ordinaires, comme des tables de cuisine, avec des marelles tracées au couteau par les enfants, des bancs de chaque côté, une chaise pour le régent, les bissacs où les enfants portaient leur déjeuner, pendus aux murs mal crépis et pleins de petits trous où on prenait du sable pour sécher l'écriture, et voilà, c'était tout: de cartes, de tableaux, point. 1.

Le Roy's use of the picturesque includes occasional reference to colourful customs whose roots lie in the distant past but the practice of which subsisted in his time. One of the more spectacular is the blessing of the animals on St Roch's day. The peasants decorate with ribbons and garlands of flowers the best specimens among their masters' livestock. Rivalry is keen and the local landowners are anxious that their workers should do them justice by presenting to the priest only the best beasts, carefully groomed for the occasion. While Le Roy captures in detail the colour of such a quaint event, he transforms the picturesque elements to illustrate a social conviction central to his work: that the wealth of the world is inequitably distributed. The message is conveyed by the sleek, well fed animals which stand in contrast to the miserable creatures

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.126.

who lead them; the emaciated peasants "avec des sans-culottes déchirés, et des culottes effilochées, les pieds nus dans leurs sabots." [1]. The obvious implication is that human life is valued much less than that of the beasts of the field. The narrator, now happily employed at his uncle's mill, realises that most peasants, and especially the métayers and casual labourers (journaliers) do not have an adequate source of income. The St Roch peasants were not collectively worth the price of the silver collars that some of their masters' dogs were sporting, and Hélie observes that "l'habitude faisait que guère personne ne s'avisait de penser à ça, et de se demander comment il se pouvait qu'il y eut encore des hommes plus malheureux que des bêtes." [2].

In his effort to establish a peculiarly Périgord tone to the novel Le Roy supplements the narrator's own observations with accounts of some of the local folklore provided by Gustou, a helper at the mill. This simple worker represents the credulous, superstitious aspect of the peasant nature. He has no faith in the country physicians, and when he falls ill he sends for the sorcier. [3]. He is acquainted with all the

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.124.

2. Ibid., p.124.

3. The avarice and incompetence of country doctors is a recurring theme in Le Roy's work. Hélie Nogaret offers this indictment of those to be found in the vicinity if Le Frau: "En ce temps-là, il y avait dans nos campagnes des gens qui se disaient médecins et qui n'étaient que de mauvais drogueurs, saignant les gens à pleines cuvettes, et ne sachant guère rien faire de plus, ne l'ayant point appris." (Le Moulin du Frau, p.192.) In his nouvelle, La Petite Nicette (1901), this practice of indiscriminate bleeding is followed by the odious M. Rudel, the "officier de santé", not because he believes it to be of any use, but because he can charge more for it than an ordinary visit: "Les pauvres seuls sont à l'abri de sa lancette." (Nicette et Milou, Calmann-Lévy, Paris 1901, p.28.)

semi-pagan rites and "à la St-Jean c'était /Gustou/ qui plantait le feu à la cafourche /carrefour/ du chemin, et le couvrait de feuillage vert avec un beau bouquet à la cime." [1]. Gustou is an invaluable member of the family group for his storytelling ability alone, and it is through him that Le Roy records stories from the repertoire of Périgord folklore which would otherwise have been lost. [2]. During the long Winter evenings Gustou entertains the family by terrifying the younger members with tales of "le Lébérou" /loup-garou/ and the "chaoucho-vieillo". [3].

The precision with which Le Roy notes detail also serves a more general literary purpose in creating passages of subtle, and not humourless, irony. In describing the interior of the residence of M. Silvain de Puygolfier, the local squire, Le Roy discloses several details intended to demonstrate the character of the inhabitants. In the dining-room the portraits of Louis XVI and Marie-Antoinette reflect the legitimist convictions of the châtelain. The author also draws to the reader's attention a folding screen on which, "la défunte dame de Puygolfier et sa fille avaient collé partout des images découpées qui n'étaient, pour la plupart, que des caricatures de Louis-Philippe, sa famille et son gouvernement." [4].

Compare Charles-Louis Philippe's similar portrait of the country doctor and subsequent peasant mistrust in La Mère et l'enfant, p.52.

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.157.

2. Ibid., pp.158-167.

3. The latter is an esprit malin which steals into bedrooms at night by passing under the door and then smothers its sleeping victim by stretching out full length on top of him.

4. Le Moulin du Frau, p.73.

A similar effect is created with a description of the bedchamber of Mlle Ponsie, Sylvain's unmarried daughter. On an errand to the residence, Hélie is ushered into the bedroom where he notices the following details: "Au-dessus de la cheminée, il y avait dans un cadre doré, une petite glace, et, plus haut, une peinture représentant un berger; non pas de ces bergers dépenaillés de chez nous, mais un berger en culotte rose et bien poudré, qui offrait à sa bergère deux tourterelles dans une cage." [1]. Just as the portraits of Louis and Marie-Antoinette reflected M. de Puygolfier's political sentiments, so too does this idealised representation of the shepherd convey the Romantic image of the peasant which the gentry and nobility believed, or persuaded themselves to believe, existed. The full effect of the irony is not appreciated until later in the novel when Le Roy gives his account of the wretchedness of a family of métayers summarily evicted from their dwelling by M. de Puygolfier. [2].

It must be said, however, that this device of the portrait could have been used to greater effect in Jacquou le croquant where the emphasis on peasant misère is much greater. In Le Moulin the theme of extreme poverty endured by the peasant is peripheral, subordinate to the author's main concern with demonstrating the moral value of rustic life as the cradle of honesty, hard work and love for family and Republic. Hélie and his uncle, as proprietors of their own mill, belong to a class of aisés among the peasantry. While they are certainly poor by bourgeois standards they do not suffer any of the

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.70.

2. Ibid., pp.256-257.

humiliations of being destitute. To employ again the distinction drawn by Péguy in his essay De Jean Coste, they endure pauvreté but have not descended to the level of misère. [1.]

In his attempt to convey the essence of rural life in Périgord through a recreation of the minutiae of daily life, Le Roy's choice of what is to be included is not a uniformly successful one. Occasionally he overestimates the ability of certain detail to evoke atmosphere and the "film au ralenti" admired by Guillaumie grinds to an almost complete halt. Alcide Dusolier, in his preface to the 1894 edition of the novel, observed that the lack of visible interference by the author increased the authenticity of the miller's narrative: "Rien de prémédité, d'agencé [...] Oui, c'est bien le meunier qui raconte au jour le jour la vie de sa famille et celle de ses voisins [...] sans qu'il tente jamais de combiner ces incident pour en tirer un effet ou une situation." [2.] That the author is concerned less with the creation of plot than with a faithful evocation of the past is admitted by the narrator. Having recounted in detail incidents which occurred during the courtship of his wife Nancy, Hélie appends the following apology to the reader:

> Je raconte comme ça tout ce qui se passait entre Nancy et moi; je sais que ce n'est rien de bien curieux, et qu'il est arrivé autant à d'autres. Mais peut-être il y en aura des vieux qui, voyant ceci, se rapelleront avec plaisir leur jeunesse. Pour moi, en le racontant, il me semble revenir à ce temps heureux. 3.

1. See Henry Poulaille, Nouvel Age littéraire, Valois, Paris 1930, p.86.

2. Le Moulin du Frau, p.vi.

3. Ibid., p.176.

Indiscriminate choice of detail does undoubtedly weaken this novel as it did elsewhere in Le Roy's work. Pointless description in Jacquou of the way in which certain birds construct their nests finds its counterpart in Le Moulin in a page and a half devoted to recording the names and place of origin of the guests at Hélie's wedding celebrations. [1] Such elaboration fails to bring the reader any closer to an appreciation of Périgord life and succeeds only in trying his patience.

The value of Le Moulin du Frau, like that of Jacquou, lies not in a detailed chronicling of nineteenth century rural life, but rather in its representation of a particular author's view of the peasant class as a whole. Le Roy chooses as central to his picture of the rural worker the general themes of Nature, in the peasant's bond to the land he works, Love, in the relationship with his family and the loyalty to his country, and Justice, in his struggle against the arbitrary power of the wealthy. It is the force of conviction provided by an articulate personal philosophy for which his novels are vehicles that distinguishes Le Roy's work from the picturesque transcriptions of his regionalist predecessors.

The influence of Rousseau on the author's thought is unmistakable. Le Roy had read all his work and in his own writing made the hymne à la nature a dominant theme. Elsewhere in Le Roy's work the concept of the healing effect of a return to the land is also explored, but it was with Le Moulin that the author best illustrated his belief in the moral value of

1. See Jacquou le croquant, p.429 and Le Moulin du Frau, pp.233-234.

rustic life. [1.] The peasant was in constant contact with the natural elements through the land he tilled. It was this contact which ensured him health of both body and mind, and his moral sense was defined by the demands made on him by the land. [2.] Formal learning, although capable of improving both the material and moral condition of the worker, harboured the danger of breaking this bond: "Certainement l'instruction est une bien bonne chose et désirable pour tous: un paysan bien instruit en vaudrait deux. Malheureusement, ça rend souvent ambitieux, et ça fait mépriser la terre." [3.]

At the beginning of the novel the young Hélie is warned by Mlle Ponsie against taking the post at the Préfecture in Périgueux. Her warning foreshadows what Hélie later learns for himself; that it is folly to exchange the freedom of action and healthy environment of a peasant's life for the unhealthy

1. Compare Jacquou and the return of the priest Bonal to a life of farming; also the loyalty to land and peasants of Rudel's son in Nicette et Milou, and the marriage of the impoverished nobleman Blaise de Roquejoffre into the peasantry in Le Roy's short story Roquejoffre (Au Pays des pierres, Fasquelle, Paris 1906). A similar conviction about the superiority of rural life is also a major theme in the novels of Emile Guillaumin. However, instead of emphasising the beneficial nature of the peasant's existence and advocating a return to it, Guillaumin prefers to describe the catastrophe awaiting those who abandon the land (Baptiste et sa femme, Albert Manceau, adjudant).

2. Compare Yvon Delbos, "Un Romancier de la terre, Eugène Le Roy", Mercure de France, 15 September 1927, p.525.

3. Le Moulin du Frau, p.395.

confinement of an office:

> ---Et à quoi arriveras-tu? [...]
> après avoir gratté du papier pendant
> vingt-cinq ans, et avoir supporté
> les ennuis du métier, les caprices
> du chef, les injustices des supérieurs.
> Vois-tu, mon petit, il te vaudrait
> mieux être tout bonnement meunier et
> vivre là, chez toi, libre et tranquille
> en travaillant. [1].

By effective use of juxtaposition Le Roy brings out the full implication in Hélie's decision to abandon the land. Before settling into his job in town, Hélie spends several weeks with his uncle at Frau. The awakening of his adolescent sexuality and the resulting infatuation with Mlle Ponsie coincides with the warmth and beauty of the countryside:

> Quels temps heureux! mes journées se
> passaient en paix et tranquillité,
> dans ce coin perdu du Périgord, au
> milieu d'une nature paysanne et forte.
> Il me semblait que cette terre couverte
> pour lors de moissons, me communiquaient
> sa vie. [2].

The impression created is that of a perceptible life force which is absorbed from the warm earth by the young man. How different in tone is the moribund atmosphere of the office to which he is summoned:

> Le bureau était une grande pièce sale,
> enfumée, avec des casiers montant
> jusqu'au plafond jauni et crevassé.
> Tous ces casiers étaient bourrés de
> cartons et de papiers, qui répandaient
> dans le bureau cette odeur particulière
> aux vieilles paperasses. [3].

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.69.
2. Ibid., p.77.
3. Ibid., pp.89-90. The dusty drabness of the office environment described briefly here by Le Roy is reminiscent of Charles-Louis Philippe's more extensive use of the setting in his portrait of Croquignole Buffières and the life of a Parisian office worker (See Croquignole, p.31). Compare also Philippe's Journal de Roger Jan: "Gardez ce plaisir pour d'autres, je n'irai pas dans vos bureaux. Planteurs de chiffres sur papier blanc, je vous hais." (La Bonne Madeleine et la pauvre Marie, p.109).

"Sale", "enfermée", "jauni", "crevassé": the essence of a way of life whose antithesis is the generative force of nature. When, after his mother's death, Hélie has the chance to escape town life his return to the mill is seen in terms of a renaissance: "Ici commence pour moi une vie nouvelle, toute simple, tout unie, réglée par le soleil, les saisons, les époques des travaux de la campagne, le cours naturel des choses." [1.]

Throughout the novel the narrator affirms his belief in the desirability of the peasant lifestyle, and in several of these declarations Le Roy's regret at himself having spent so many years as a gratte-papier is evident. [2.] In his creation of a general picture of Périgord life it is clear that Le Roy here allows his parti-pris to distort that commitment to realism which he displays in his transcription of detail. The raison d'être of Le Moulin being to illustrate the superiority of the rustic over the urban, the author ignores its potential sordidness, exposed in Balzac's Les Paysans and Zola's La Terre, and

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.106. This return to the moral stability represented by the countryside is repeated later in the novel in the example of Fournier, the son of a local landowner who had been sent to Paris to read law. Disheartened by the duplicity of the barrister's profession which depends upon the ability to argue for the guilty as well as the innocent, he comes back to Périgord to farm some family land and eventually marries Hélie's daughter.

2. See Le Moulin du Frau, p.516:

> La vie de campagnard est une vie large, santeuse et libre; le paysan en sabots et en bonnet de laine est roi sur sa terre [...] Au lieu de rechercher les emplois, de galoper après les places, depuis celle d'homme d'équipe ou de recors, jusqu'à celle de collecteur [...], la jeunesse de toute condition devrait se tourner vers la terre.

keeps any description of extreme poverty to a minimum. This represents a major difference in emphasis not only from the work of Guillaumin and Philippe, where the constant threat of deprivation is a principal concern for the peasant, but also from his own later works; notably, Jacquou le croquant and L'Ennemi de la mort. [1] Uncle Sicaire's mill, although requiring much hard work, is a lucrative business by peasant standards and the quality of life it offers Hélie is described in enthusiastic terms:

> J'étais au Frau chez moi [...] me levant, me couchant, allant au travail quand je voulais, et ne voyant autour de moi que des figures joventes. Et puis le grand air, le beau soleil, le travail sain qui fatigue le corps et fait bien dormir; le plaisir qu'on a à voir pousser et mûrir ce qu'on a semé, à voir profiter des bêtes bien soignées. [2]

This emphasis on independence and pride in one's work stands in contrast to the submission of Jacquou's father or of Tiennon (in Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple) to the whims of an overseer and the terms of a lease which required the best of their produce to revert to the master.

The central character of Le Moulin is uncle Sicaire. He is the point of intersection of several of Le Roy's themes and provides a focal point for the reader's attention in a novel which is singularly lacking in plot. He is the embodiment of the peasant libre penseur, loyal to the Republic and

1. Compare the insistence on the importance in Jacquou's family on even the coarsest bread "pour ceux qui vivaient en bonne partie de châtaignes, de pommes de terre et de bouillie de blé d'Espagne" (Jacquou, p.22) and the description of the peasants of the Double region in Périgord, "mal vêtus, mal logés, mal nourris, minés par la fièvre" (L'Ennemi de la mort, pp.82-83.)

2. Le Moulin du Frau, pp.135-136.

the land which nourishes him; a man of patient labour and a model of paternal love for the ever-increasing Nogaret family. The love theme is much employed in Le Roy's novels. The relationship between man and woman is based on a law of nature and, as such, is inviolable. Although idylls depicting young romance abound---Hélie and Nancy (Le Moulin du Frau), Jacquou and Lina (Jacquou le croquant), Lefrancq and Michelette (Les Gens d'Auberoque)---they invariably lead to a lasting and responsible union in marriage. Both carnal desire and frivolous social coquetry, confined in Le Roy's work to the moneyed classes, are distortions of the natural law and lead to degradation and even death. [1] Husband and wife owe to each other absolute fidelity and support. Man's duty is to protect a weaker, but by no means delicate, sex. The fundamental conservatism of this area of Le Roy's philosophy is evident from Hélie's conception of woman's duty as the fulfilment of her natural, biological role:

> Une femme pour être belle, doit être ce que la nature l'a faite, forte et féconde, et non pas une créature faible, bonne pour les plaisirs stériles, mais incapable de supporter les travaux de la maternité. La première des conditions pour une femme, c'est de pouvoir faire des enfants robustes et sains, et de les nourrir sans en patir. [2]

It is Sicaire who is at the centre of the only dramatic incident in the novel. Following the coup d'état of 1852, this peace loving patriarch is detained as a potential counterrevolutionary and the account of his arrest shows Le Roy capable, where it suits his purpose, of achieving dramatic effect. Set against

1. Compare Valérie de la Ralphie's passion for Damase (Mademoiselle de la Ralphie) and Minna de Légé's rich but loveless marriage (L'Ennemi de la mort).

2. Le Moulin du Frau, p.368.

the general harmony of life at the mill, the intrusion of the external world in the form of the gendarmes is especially brutal. The family's security and sense of continuity are transformed overnight into chaos, just as the arrival of the police shatters the peace of the midday meal:

> Ils poussèrent la porte et entrèrent, puis le plus vieux dit: --- Sicaire Nogaret, au nom de la loi, je vous arrête; il faut nous suivre.
>
> Là-dessus ma femme jette un cri et devient pâle comme la mort, et le petit qui s'était endormi au téton de sa mère, réveillé tout d'un coup, pleurait et criait [...]
>
> Elle ne disait rien et pleurait. Sa poitrine se soulevait, étouffant de gros soupirs. Nous sortîmes, mais quand elle entendit les gendarmes descendre l'escalier, emmenant mon oncle, elle jeta un grand cri, et tomba à terre. Le pauvre oncle entendant ce cri, voulut remonter, mais les gendarmes l'attrapèrent par les bras et l'emmenèrent. 1.

The cries of Hélie's wife and child provide a contrast to the level-headedness of the men who, realising the futility of resistance, submit because it seems the most prudent course of action. The entire scene, and especially Sicaire's attempt to escape his guards and return to the unconscious woman, is theatrical in the extreme and betrays a tendency to melodrama found elsewhere in Le Roy's work. 2. The episode is rescued from the improbable by the quality of martyrdom which attaches

1. Le Moulin du Frau, pp.282-284.

2. This melodramatic element often takes the form of suicide. Compare the drowning of Jacquou's Lina (Jacquou le croquant, p.327) and that of Nicette (Nicette et Milou, p.138); also M. de Fersac's self-inflicted pistol wound (L'Ennemi de la mort, p.380) and Céleste Nougarède's suicide by hanging in Le Grand Milou (Nicette et Milou, pp.307-308). In the same category is the final descent into insanity of Valérie (Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, pp.296-297) and of Mme Chaboin (Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.317); the one tortured by carnal passion and the other thwarted in her social ambitions.

itself to Sicaire; a result of the author's patient and credible presentation of the character's virtues which succeed in capturing the reader's sympathy.

Similarly, the description of Sicaire's death is spared the mawkishness which would have resulted had the characterisation been less convincing. He dies as he has lived. He succumbs to old age in a peaceful and dignified death at home surrounded by family. The scene, which reveals Le Roy's talent for establishing mood with economy of words deserves to be reproduced here in its entirety:

> C'était un de ces beaux jours de l'été
> de la Saint-Martin, qui sont communs
> en Périgord. Le soleil rayait fort,
> séchant le long de la rivière les regains
> dont l'odeur montait jusqu'à nous. Le
> moulin était arrêté, et on n'entendait
> que le bruit des eaux tombant de l'écluse.
> En face de la fenêtre, le vent faisait
> bruire les feuilles de notre arbre de
> la Liberté qui commençaient à jaunir.
> Tout à la cime de l'arbre, le drapeau
> que les droles /enfants/ y avaient monté
> le quatorze Juillet flottait toujours
> au vent. L'oncle regarda tout ça un moment
> sans rien dire, puis il appela bien bas,
> bien bas le pauvre, l'aîné de Fournier,
> qui avait ses quatorze ans:
> --- Viens là, mon Robertou.
> Quand le drole fut là, penché sur le lit,
> l'oncle lui dit tout doucement, comme
> un souffle,
> --- Chante la Marseillaise. [1]

In this description are united several of the principal themes of the novel. Nature, whose landscape the dying man can survey from his window, plays the role of consoler by illustrating death as part of a cycle as inevitable as the yellowing leaves on the Liberty tree and the crops cut and drying in the late Summer sun. The Family is united and gathered around his bed, while the old man's final concern is to hear the anthem of the Republic. This emphasis on the stability and cohesion of rural

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.507.

family life stands in sharp contrast to the novels of Zola whose firsthand knowledge of the peasantry was limited to a three day visit to the Beauce. In the Zolaesque tradition the peasant is incapable of dignity, being unable to form moral distinctions or participate in any sort of corporate behaviour. His actions are determined principally by a voracious sexual appetite and secondarily by his hereditary greed for land. [1.]

Although by comparison with Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple or Le Syndicat de Baugignoux Le Roy's picture of the rural working class may seem stylised, or even idealised, his generally benevolent attitude is not without some critical relief. On several occasions the author exposes the foibles of his subjects, sometimes tempering the edge of his remarks with humour and sometimes not. For example, the naïve credulity of the peasants comes under attack in Le Roy's description of a country fair where glib charlatans prove capable of selling anything to the locals. One particular vendor peddling a powder for killing worms baits his potential clients with a gruesome description of the death of a young boy whose parents had refused to give him the remedy. To heighten the effect of his story he waves in front of them a skeleton which he claims to be that of the defunct child. The description of the effect this had on the assembled peasants is both comic and pathetic:

> Oh! alors, en voyant ça et entendant le cliquettement des os, les pauvres bonnes femmes de mères qui étaient là, en avaient des tressaillements dans les entrailles, et prenaient pour cinq sous un paquet de la poudre qui tuait ces vers maudits. Et les hommes, quoique plus durs, en achetaient aussi. [2.]

1. Compare the incest of Palmyre and her idiot brother Hilarion, the the peasant servant, Jacqueline, whom "tous les valets [...] culbutaient dans la paille; pas un homme ne venait à la ferme, sans lui passer sur le ventre." (Emile Zola, La Terre, Garnier-Flammarion, Paris 1973, p.114.)

2. Le Moulin du Frau, p.133.

The cunning and avarice of the peasant, dominant traits in both Balzac's Les Paysans and Zola's La Terre, are introduced briefly into Le Moulin du Frau in the character of Nancy's fosterfather, Jardou. The unsympathetic picture is all the more striking in its contrast with the customary benevolence with which Le Roy treats the subject. Jardou is a greedy and suspicious man, always on the alert for what can be had for himself. His greed extends even to the relationship with his wife who, to contrast the mutual trust reigning in the Nogaret household, is obliged to "tromper son homme sur quelques douzaines d'oeufs ou une paire de poulets, pour acheter à sa fille quelque cotillon, ou un mouchoir de tête." [1] If the reader is not meant to sympathise with a character like Jardou he is asked at least to understand the reasons for his behaviour. Le Roy offers as an apology for such weakness in the peasant strain centuries of conditioning by the constant struggle for survival:

> Ces défauts se rencontraient assez souvent chez nos anciens qui ont tant souffert, et qui ont si péniblement amassé sou par sou, le peu qui nous a faits indépendants. Durant des siècles, la misère du paysan l'a rendu insensible aux misères d'autrui. [2]

This willingness on the author's part to forgive the peasant much in view of his history is found in all of Le Roy's work. It reaches its zenith, however, in L'Ennemi de la mort in the character of Daniel Charbonnière. Insult and constant persecution by the peasants is met by unconditional forgiveness from the doctor who is working to improve their lot. In this final

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.225.

2. Ibid., p.183.

work Le Roy succeeds in elevating his story to the level of myth by creating a truly heroic protagonist, but in the process sacrifices that sense of the probable which is present in the other novels.

Le Roy's most striking stylistic achievement, rendered most successfully in the two exclusively rustic novels Le Moulin and Jacquou, is the integration of Périgord patois into the language of the narrative. As has already been noted, Le Roy differed from the Félibrige writers insofar as he was not prepared to use dialect in his work to the exclusion of standard French. He did, however, share their concern that knowledge of the regional languages was dying; a concern expressed on more than one occasion by the elderly narrator of Le Moulin in the recollection of his youth:

> C'était une coutume générale alors, même dans la bonne bourgeoisie, de parler le patois, et d'en faire entrer des mots et même des phrases dans les parlements faits en français. De là, ces locutions patoises, ces tournures de phrases translatées de périgordin en français dont nous avons l'accoutumance. J'en devrais parler au passé, car, si, autrefois, chacun tenait à gloire de parler familièrement notre vieux patois, combien de Périgordins l'ignorent aujourd'hui! [1].

This fear that an irreplaceable part of the regional heritage was being lost was to a great extent responsible for his decision to attempt to capture the Périgord speech in his novels. He was as aware as George Sand that dialect was an invaluable device for enhancing the sense of authenticity in his writing. In his efforts to achieve this stylistic amalgam of patois and French, Le Roy displays greater ingenuity that either Balzac or Sand. Although a satisfying balance is not

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.17.

always achieved between the two elements, the author conveys a more profound understanding of peasant speech than did his predecessors whose efforts often remained on the level of mere transcription. [1] For both Le Moulin and Jacquou the autobiographical convention of first person narrative is chosen. This affords an obvious advantage to the creation of authentic narrative language by allowing the author to approach the stylistic problem from within, under the guise of a peasant rather than appearing in the more formal and distant role of scribe.

The colloquial syntax helps lend a smoothness and rapidity which leaves the reader the impression that he is indeed being addressed by Hélie Nogaret, without the mediation of the author. Frequently the narrator pauses in his story to make brief confidential asides. Of a small bridge "en dos d'âne" which existed in the time of his youth the elderly narrator comments: "Depuis, on l'a démoli, ce pont, je ne sais pourquoi." [2] About one of the innkeepers in the town the reader is also confidentially informed that "Il aimait assez le vin blanc, l'aubergiste." [3]

Despite the sympathy with which Le Roy viewed the peasantry, his commitment to realism was sufficient to constrain him occasionally to convey something of the coarseness to which the labourer is susceptible. The language of his peasants, however, never approaches in frequency or intensity the crudeness of expression found in Zola's Fouan family. As if to counter in

1. See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.105.

2. Le Moulin du Frau, p.187.

3. Ibid., p.192.

advance any accusation of the type frequently levelled at the Naturalists that suspect language is intentionally used to add spice to the narrative, Hélie explains that,

> Si on trouve quelquefois, par-ci, par-là, des F et des B, il ne faut pas s'en étonner. Nous autres paysans nous lâchons un: foutre, ou un: bougre assez facilement, de manière que si on n'en avait pas rencontré on aurait trouvé ça bien étonnant de ma part. [1].

To introduce elements of Périgord speech into the narrative Le Roy employs several techniques with varying degrees of success. The most obvious method, and one that was exploited by the regionalists, is to introduce _in extenso_ direct transcriptions from local speech. Such examples, which are usually homespun proverbs or verses of song, make their way without translation into the text. At one point, for example, Hélie makes the following observation regarding the religious practices of his ancestors: "Ni mon grand'père, ni mon père n'avaient voulu se confesser à l'article de la mort, et mon grand'père répétait souvent ce proverbe patois: Lous cureis et lous pizous, gâten las maizous." [2]. Although difficult to decipher for those without a basic knowledge of the dialect, such insertions contain a picturesque value by adding to the impression of the authenticity of the rustic atmosphere. Occasionally, however, Le Roy abuses the technique by transcriptions which are too long. The most serious instance of this occurs when he reproduces in the original patois all five stanzas of a traditional Périgord

1. _Le Moulin du Frau_, p.18.

2. "Les curés et les pigeons gâtent les moissons." _Ibid._, p.345.

wedding song. [1.] Such lengthy digressions, far from enhancing the rustic character of the novel, weaken it by unnecessary interruption. Another method more frequently employed is the selective use of individual patois words in a context which ensures the reader a reasonable degree of accuracy in devining the meaning. This is regularly done with common adverbs or prepositions like "brin" /"guère"/ or "emmi" /"avec"/ which, after frequent use, become part of the reader's vocabulary and further strengthen the bond between him and the narrator. Some passages like the following reference to the end of a winter's evening's work shelling nuts, places greater demand on the reader's capacity for deduction: "Cependant on avait fini d'énoiser, et on mettait les nougaillons dans les sacs, et les coquilles dans les paillassons." [2.] In Jacquou le croquant Le Roy supplements this method of explaining dialectal meaning by a straightforward use of footnotes to annotate the text. [3.]

Most often Le Roy prefers to provide French approximations within the text; sometimes signalling his intervention by juxtaposing the French with the regional word ("un devantal, qui du côté de Sarlat on appelle un faudal, et en français un tablier"), sometimes dispensing with the patois altogether. [4.]

1. See Le Moulin du Frau, pp.146-147. This transcription, together with similar long passages of dialect, was suppressed in a reedited version of the novel published by Fasquelle in 1905. Le Roy made extensive modifications to the language of this second edition, replacing regional expressions by standard French. For a full list of these changes see Marc Ballot, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, pp.147-153.
2. Le Moulin du Frau, pp.164-165.
3. See, for example, his note on the use of "drole", a frequently employed noun in his prose: "1. Drole qui, dans le parler du Périgord signifie garçon, fille: --- "un drole, une drole", --- s'écrit sans accent circonflexe sur l'o." (Jacquou le croquant, p.2n.)
4. Le Moulin du Frau, p.225.

In the opening pages of the novel Hélie alerts the reader that, "J'emploie en écrivant en français, des expressions qui ne sont pas françaises, et [...] je donne à des mots français leur signification patoise." [1] Throughout the work the reader encounters numerous examples of an image or a figure of speech taken from the dialect and rendered into its closest French equivalent. In this manner the narrator can refer to a servant whom "mon oncle laissait couper le farci, comme on dit" [ie. "porter les culottes"] or express his satisfaction in watching the fruit in the vineyard ripen: "Quand les grappes se gonflaient comme le tétin d'une femme grosse, quel plaisir que de les voir profiter." [2] In his attempt to reconcile the two language forms Le Roy succeeds in both preserving his native dialect by giving it written form, and lending to standard French, by putting it into contact with a rich oral tradition, a new freshness and colour of expression. [3]

Taken as a whole, Le Moulin du Frau is successful in establishing the credibility of its peasant narrator. The colloquial rhythm of the sentences and the integrated elements of dialect combine with a directness of perception compatible with the simplicity of the peasant. It is this simplicity of vision and expression which saves from excessive sentimentality

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.17.

2. Ibid., pp.173; 302-303.

3. See Marc Ballot, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, p.307: "Le Roy a sauvé notre patois en l'employant pour farcir son français d'artiste." For a comprehensive examination of the dialectal origins of Le Roy's vocabulary see Marc Ballot's excellent chapter "Le Vocabulaire" in Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, pp.115-173.

the description of Sicaire's death or the evocation of Hélie's idyllic courtship of Nancy. It is this close identification of thought with utterance which gives Hélie's most unsophisticated statements, like the following assessment of his wife, considerable eloquence and pathos:

> Ça n'est pas pour dire, mais je crois qu'il n'y a guère de femmes comme ça. Quoique j'aie soixante-deux ans et elle cinquante-huit, je l'aime toujours, et je le lui dis quelquefois. On se moquera de moi si on veut, mais je n'ai point connu d'autre femme dans toute ma vie; elle est la seule. [1].

However, in Le Moulin du Frau, as in Jacquou le croquant, the fiction of a peasant narrator is frequently weakened by the intrusion of the articulate author. The example of Le Roy serves as a reminder of the contradiction contained in the designation 'worker-writer' and the stylistic problem of the 'effacement de l'auteur.' By definition such a writer was---certainly during the quarter century before the first War---an exception to his class. Although between 1850 and 1914 technological progress was gradually reducing the burden of physical labour, the peasant was still a long way from enjoying sufficient leisure to be able to reflect on and appreciate the quality of life he was leading. The chronicler of the peasant's life, an inescapable characteristic of which was the monotonous cycle of routine labour, had to be able to subtract himself from the common mass in order to see the subject he wanted to portray. To an extent such writers, including Le Roy, encountered the same frustration to their ambition to capture the essence of peasant life as did George Sand when she complained that, "J'ai bien vu, j'ai bien senti le beau dans le simple; mais voir et peindre sont deux!" [2]. They were

1. Le Moulin du Frau, pp.514-515.
2. "Notice" to La Mare au diable (Garnier, Paris 1962), p.5.

prevented by their alien temperament---not because they were bourgeois but because they were artists---from a total identification with their subject.

If Le Roy's sensitivity to detail is one of his greatest strengths as a novelist, it is also a trait bound to separate him from the labouring peasant too occupied ever to be struck by a resemblance between a ripening bunch of grapes and "le tétin d'une femme grosse." Some of his descriptions are static in their stylisation and betray an eye for colour and effect not consistent with a worker's mentality:

> C'était beau à voir, ma foi, ces deux hommes qui luttaient, butés l'un contre l'autre, comme deux taureaux entêtés. Leur front luisait sous la flamme rouge des lampions, leurs nasières ouvertes à y fourrer le pouce, leurs yeux brillants, leur bouche serrée [...] accusaient leurs efforts; leurs tendons sortaient de la chair, comme des cordes, et les veines de leur cou se gonflaient comme prêts à crever. 1.

The above description is of a wrestling match which the young Hélie witnessed at a fair in Périgueux. The play of light and shadow on physical form---the eyes which are "brillants", the red light reflecting on sweating faces, and the muscles which stand out in relief "comme des cordes"---give the whole an expressionistic effect. Such descriptions, while retaining the colloquial format and employing appropriately rural similes ("comme des taureaux entêtés"), nonetheless convey that heightened sense of perception to environment which distinguishes the novelist. It is to Le Roy's credit that the dissonance between the authorial and narrative voice rarely undermines completely Hélie's credibility. Especially in the creation of dialogue, and notably in Gustou's spellbound account of

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.26.

local superstition, the author succeeds in capturing the power in peasant observation which the simplicity of observation belies. Le Roy's characters rarely succumb to the maudlin sentimentality which plagues Sand's peasant creations and which results from her attempt to force onto the peasant temperament a poetic idealism which it cannot support. [1.]

A more serious threat to balance in his novels is posed by Le Roy's keen interest in politics. An acquaintance with the works of Michelet and Proudhon combined with knowledge of the history of nobles' oppression of the peasantry in Périgord and his own observation of the misery around him helped to create firm ideas about political and economic justice. These emerge least equivocally in the final chapter where the narrator, having ended his life's story, makes explicit economic, social and political convictions conveyed implicitly in the main body of the novel. The danger to the literary merit of the work is obvious and exposed Le Roy to the criticism of being little more than a pamphleteer. [2.]

The overtly didactic nature of his work lies close to the surface in all the novels, where Le Roy frequently intrudes

1. François le champi (1850), itself a first person narrative, is especially flawed in this respect. The following declaration of François to Madeleine would appear more credible in the mouth of a Parisian gentleman than that of an uneducated peasant boy:

> Je dis que je souffrirais toutes les peines que peut avoir un homme vivant vie mortelle, et que je serais encore content en pensant que Madeleine Blanchet a de l'amitié pour moi. Et c'est pour ça que je disais tout à l'heure que si vous pensiez de même, vous diriez: François m'aime tant que je suis contente d'être au monde. (François le champi, Garnier 1962, p.271.)

2. See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.42.

and where his voice supersedes that of the narrator. In Moulin Hélie's patient, detailed narrative is broken on several occasions by outbursts of indignation. Almost without exception these interruptions are made by Sicaire, whose uncompromising republicanism and hatred of injustice identify him with Le Roy. The concept of peasant solidarity is a major preoccupation and, in terms which prefigure Marcel Salembier's attempts in Guillaumin's Le Syndicat de Baugignoux to syndicate the Bourbonnais peasants, Sicaire declares that the solution to rural injustice lies with the peasant if he will take the first step:

> Ceux qui travaillent, finiront par comprendre qu'ils sont les plus nombreux et les plus forts. Ce n'est pas les riches qui vous donnent le pain c'est au contraire vous autres qui les nourrissez [...] Le jour donc où les paysans ne travailleraient plus pour eux, que deviendraient-ils? Ils crèveraient de faim. C'est le peuple qui fait tout marcher, vous entendez bien; qu'il se couche seulement comme un pauvre âne trop chargé et mal nourri, et tout s'arrête dans le pays. 1.

Elsewhere in the narrative a similarly rhetorical appeal is made by Sicaire to express indignation at M. de Puygolfier's expulsion of his métayers. It appears less specifically addressed to the Périgord peasantry and constitutes a more

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.66. Compare Salembier's assessment of the peasant position:

> --- Ils sont quelques-uns qui parlent toujours de la révolution; mais la révolution, c'est en chacun d'eux, en chacun de nous qu'elle se doit d'abord accomplir. Que les individus modifient leur entendement, développent leur volonté agissante, et l'état de choses nouveau s'établira de lui-même.
>
> (Le Syndicat de Baugignoux, p.263.)

general appeal to the reader to combat injustice wherever it exists:

> Il n'y a qu'un remède /../ c'est l'instruction et la liberté. Les gens finiront par comprendre, que c'est leur devoir et leur intérêt de se soutenir, et qu'ils seront les maîtres, le jour où ils sauront tous dire /../ --- Non! [1].

In the closing pages of the novel, the reminiscences of Hélie completed, the author's own presence becomes most noticeable. Deprived of the narrative background, Le Roy's theories, including ideas for a restructuring of the rural economy, give to the end of the work an excessively polemical tone. It is his conviction that the first step towards social justice and economic stability must be the peasant's ownership of the land he works. This, Le Roy admits, would not eradicate poverty but it would put an end to the humiliation of total destitution: "Il y aura peut-être encore de la pauvreté digne qui n'effraie pas les vaillants, mais plus de misère imméritée." [2].

It is the general tone which distinguishes this novel from the better Jacquou le croquant which followed in 1900. Despite the concentration of social comment found in the closing pages of Le Moulin and the occasional pointed criticism during Hélie's long monologue, the reader must search very hard indeed for any revolutionary overtones. While certain aspects of

1. Le Moulin du Frau, p.255.

2. Ibid., p.529. Both Le Roy and Guillaumin considered this sort of land reform essential to any improvement in the peasant condition. However, if the métayage system was entrenched in Périgord and Allier, the tendency in most other regions of France was towards small private landholdings. Between 1850 and 1900 the number of farms of 100 hectares decreased from 32,280 to 29,540, while small farms from 1 to 10 hectares increased from 2,435,00 to 2,523,000. See Paul Vernois, Le Roman rustique de George Sand à Ramuz, Nizet, Paris 1962, p.124.

peasant poverty are conveyed, any extended exploitation of misère as a literary theme is avoided and Le Roy's emphasis, like Rousseau's, falls on the benefits to be gained by living in harmony with the laws of nature. Le Moulin may be seen as a prelude which, with its evocation of Périgord life, introduces the fundamental concept of social justice.

> Combien est grande la foule de ceux
> qui de père en fils travaillent,
> suent et peinent à force, et sont
> misérables! [...]
> Ah! quand donc se lèvera sur le
> peuple le soleil de la Justice! 1.

With Jacquou le croquant the tone changes from indignation to violence as Le Roy attempts a solution to the problem he has posed.

1. Le Moulin du Frau, pp.256-257.

Jacquou le croquant.

The second of Le Roy's major works, which he had begun in March 1896 and finished May the following year, was published in 1900 by Calmann-Lévy. [1] Originally entitled La Forêt Barade, the manuscript was bought by Ganderax, the editor of La Revue de Paris, for 4,000 francs. It was he who pressed for the change in title to include the revolutionary overtones of "Jacquou" and "Jacquerie", hoping thereby to stimulate the public's interest in the volume. [2]

Like Moulin du Frau it is a retrospective first person chronicle whose narrator, the ninety-year-old Jacquou, presents the story as his own life. The action begins in 1815 on the eve of the Restoration and is centred around a small family of métayers---father, mother and young Jacquou---who work one of farms of the Marquis de Nansac. In contrast to Le Moulin, emphasis is immediately placed on the extreme misery in which these labourers live. The opening pages are devoted to a juxtaposition of the poverty of dwelling and diet at the métairie and the luxury and abundance to be found at the Château de l'Herm, the family seat of the marquis. The novel begins with mother and son making their way at midnight through the snow to the château to hear Christmas Mass. It is through

1. The novel appeared serially in La Revue de Paris between 15 March and 15 May 1899. All textual references are taken from the 1900 Calmann-Lévy edition. The following editions of the novel also appeared: Mornay (Paris) 1925; Calmann-Lévy (Paris) 1945, 1948, 1952, 1954, 1969; C.E.L. (Cannes) 1958 /extracts/; Livre de poche (Paris 1971); Livre Club Diderot (Paris) 1972; Gallimard (Paris) 1977; Presses-Pocket (Paris) 1978.

2. In the Centre region of France the term "croquant" was applied to all the peasants in revolt under the ancien régime.

the inquisitive---and as yet uncritical---eyes of the boy that the various discrepancies are noted. Although the social significance of the scene may not register with young Jacquou, its implications are not lost on the reader who will throughout this novel be exposed to Le Roy's less subtle satire on French rural society.

The initial spur to the action is the character Laborie. He is the landlord's régisseur, a post universally despised among the peasantry, and which in rural proletarian literature became synonmous with corruption. Laborie takes delight in holding the sharecroppers to the letter of the often disastrous terms in their leases while at the same time trying to seduce the women while their husbands work in the fields. Jacquou's father is pushed to the limit by such harassment and when Laborie kills the family dog for allegedly worrying the game, he seeks out the marquis' man and shoots him. At the subsequent trial the prosecution insists that the murder had been planned over a long period of time and the father is sentenced to twenty years' hard labour.

Driven from their landholding, mother and son repair to a disused tuilerie in the middle of the Double forest. Here the woman tries to raise her son by taking on odd jobs in the surrounding farms while Jacquou himself flourishes in the freedom afforded by the immense forest. After the father dies from the hardships of forced labour, the wife, in an intensely melodramatic scene, makes Jacquou swear vengeance on the Nansac family. Overwork soon kills the woman and the nine-year-old orphan is taken into care by the saintly priest Bonal. He is raised in the presbytery until Bonal is defrocked by the local bishop who learns that during the Revolution Bonal had consented

to the civil constitution of the clergy. Subsequently, the two farm the land until the death of the priest when Jacquou reverts to the liberty of the forest. There follow two romantic idylls with the boy falling in love first with Lina, a local girl, and then, paradoxically, with the youngest daughter of the Marquis de Nansac. The first romance ends in melodrama when the desperate Lina drowns herself after the marquis' men abduct Jacquou for attempting to set fire to the woods around the château. It is from the cover of the forest that the ultimate revenge is worked upon the Nansacs, when in 1830 the adolescent Jacquou leads a band of local malcontents to burn down the château itself. [1] Although captured and sent for trial at Périgueux, the boy is released by the general amnesty following the final fall of the Bourbon regime.

The dénouement is rapid as the ninety-year-old narrator gives a brief account of his marriage to Lina's best friend and the thirteen children subsequently produced. After a career as a charcoal burner, he has become the village story-teller reminding the younger generations about the events of the old days. Among other things he tells them that after the ruin of the marquis the property of l'Herm was put up for sale and bought in lots by the local peasantry. In this way the circle is completed by the people's repossession of land which, long before the advent of nobility, had been held in common.

1. The inspiration for the attack on the fictional Marquis de Nanzac's château at l'Herm appears to have been those made in 1830 and 1848 on the Château de Pazayac (canton de Terrasson) of a certain Comte de Manzac. Although this château was ransacked in the earlier attack it was never actually burned down.

Critical comment on Jacquou was polite but restrained; except from those who wanted to press the novel to their own particular purpose. Mistral, for example, inevitably saw it as a guardian of Dordogne's social and political history and enthused that, "C'est fier de couleur et fort de saveur. On dirait un poème." [1]. Writing in La Revue hebdomadaire in 1900, Henry Bordeaux---apparently unaware of the prior publication of Le Moulin du Frau---produced a singularly imperceptive article. He ignored most considerations of literary merit, preferring to use Jacquou as a vehicle for his own theories about rural decline. He praised the novel as a skilful and moving evocation of the author's native province which assured it a definite historical and sociological value. Considering the testamentary restrictions of the Code Civil and universal suffrage as the twin threats to the cohesion of traditional peasant life, he valued Jacquou as the portrait of an integral social class before the advent of modern democratic influences. A regionalist, Bordeaux also considered the novel a significant salvo in the battle against literary centralisation: "Je veux /...7 répéter que Jacquou le croquant est d'une savoureuse humanité, et que nos romanciers ont tout à gagner à peindre amoureusement quelque coin de terre où ils aient vécu, dont ils aient connu les habitants, au lieu de perdre leur originalité de terroir dans la grande dévorant, Paris." [2].

For Henri Ghéon, on the other hand, the value of Jacquou lay in Le Roy's ability to make essential provincial phenomena of interest to the Parisian reader: "Dans une forme d'art qui

1. See Marc Ballot, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, p.304.

2. La Revue hebdomadaire, March 1900, p.114.

demande un labeur pénible de style, d'„acclimatement„ encore plus que de documentation, et qui risque d'ennuyer auteur et lecteur tout ensemble, M. Eugène Le Roy a réalisé une oeuvre curieuse, colorée, pittoresque, humaine, qui sent la roture et la glèbe... En dépit de la mode, il faut la lire." [1].

Maurice Vitrac compared Jacquou with Le Moulin du Frau, identifying it as a much more overtly political work than its predecessor. He saw as its central theme the rehabilitation of the peasant figure after centuries of repression by the landowning class: "[...] 89 n'a émancipé que la petite bourgeoisie paysanne [...] Pour le travailleur des champs 89 n'a été qu'une duperie, [...] il n'a fait que changer de maître [...] Il reste à faire de lui un homme et un citoyen. Cette pensée qui soutient obscurément [Le Moulin du Frau], n'y est qu'éparse, elle devient dans le second ouvrage d'Eugène Le Roy, Jacquou le croquant, l'idée directrice et l'ossature même du drame." [2].

Subsequently, one of the most enthusiastic commentators on Le Roy has been the left-wing critic Gaston Roger. In his first article in Europe on the subject he saw the literary value of Jacquou residing in the balance struck between the bucolic idealism of George Sand's pastoral novels and the naturalism of Zola's portrait of the peasantry. In Le Roy the peasantry finally found an apologist committed to treating them like human beings rather than as literary stereotypes: "La vie de l'homme des champs n'est ni dans l'idylle ni dans

1. La Revue blanche, January-April 1900, p.557.

2. "Un grand romancier périgourdin: Eugène Le Roy", La Grande Revue, 16 January 1907, pp.168-169.

le drame; elle est dans la vérité. Le paysan est un homme: il a donc en germe des vices (en dépit de Rousseau) aussi bien que des vertus." [1.]

In the most penetrating article on Le Roy, Roger defended the author against the charge of primitivism; neither his profession nor his lack of education prevented him from writing a work of considerable finesse. Jacquou was a well paced and well proportioned novel inhabited by convincing characters. That these characters are not complex was a virtue rather than a literary liability and not to be regarded as facile or simple minded. The figures in Jacquou are portrayed in terms of their physical environment and his historical heritage. As such they might be seen as a natural extension of that milieu. Roger attacked the modern emphasis placed on psychological intricacy and railed against the idea that, "La distinction, c'est de disserter doctement sur les héros de Gide ou de Mauriac. Mais ceux de George Sand, d'Eugène Le Roy ou de Pourrat [...] sont tenus pour pâture mineure, convenable aux natures naïves peu éprises de subtilités." [2.] In the same issue of Europe a fellow collaborator, Philippe Ratoret, attributed much of the authenticity of the peasant illusion to a liberal use of local vocabulary --- and especially proverbs --- with which Le Roy himself had grown up: "[Cet] écrivain périgourdin a su faire parler les paysans [...] Balzac et George Sand ont essayé de rendre vivante la parole des paysans. Ils n'y ont pas réussi parce qu'ils n'ont pas vécu avec eux. Le Roy est un des leurs." [3.]

1. Gaston Roger, "Eugène Le Roy et le régionalisme démocratique", Europe, 1 May 1953, p.110.

2. Gaston Roger, "Eugène Le Roy, romancier régionaliste", Europe, May 1957, p.13.

3. Philippe Ratoret, "La Misère paysanne dans les proverbes de Jacquou le croquant", Europe, May 1957, pp.31-32.

It was Gaston Guillaumie, who in his book on Le Roy, captured the common denominator in all the favourable criticism of Jacquou; namely, a simplicity of style and lack of direct dramatic appeal to the reader evident in Le Moulin: "Le principal mérite du livre est dans sa simplicité du style, dans l'absence totale de procédés de rhétorique, dans la sincérité absolue, qui en fait une merveille d'objectivité." [1].

It can certainly be argued that the 'langage dénué' in which the events are related, lacking much of the impassioned rhetoric of Le Moulin, does lend an illusion of objectivity to the work. Considerations of objectivity, however, must be limited to language, for Le Roy nailed his colours firmly to the mast in his creation of characters. Much of the stylistic appeal of this novel is due to the detailed description of the Dordogne countryside, the Forêt Barade and the dwellings of the various social orders from marquis to métayer. Le Roy wisely avoided for the most part imaginative simile and extended metaphor in an attempt to render the simplicity of vision of his peasant narrator. Jacquou is flawed on more than one occasion, however, by description which, while admirable in its depth, betrays a preoccupation with picturesque minutiae misplaced in an adolescent peasant narrator. From a structural point of view, these descriptions are far too long and seriously disrupt the novel's progression. When properly controlled they can juxtapose effectively the tranquil stability of the countryside with the agitated course of human actions. In self indulgent passages, however, such as the two page description of how birds construct their nests, or the seemingly interminable list of local herbs and their various uses, the credible

1. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.47.

narrator is sacrificed to the author's self appointed task as chronicler of his native province. [1.]

A much more subtle manner of adding the Périgord flavour to the narrative is the use of regional vocabulary and idiom. Alive to the dangers of introducing dialect into standard French, Le Roy employed several techniques with varying degrees of success to resolve the problem. The least satisfactory way is used only rarely and consists of footnoting any regional peculiarity which appears in the text. Hence, the mother's instruction to Jacquou, "Il est l'heure [...] va, mon drole" is expanded by the following note at the foot of the page: "Drole qui, dans le parler du Périgord, signifie garçon, fille: --- „un drole, une drole„ --- s'écrit sans accent circonflexe sur l'o." [2.] On occasion, the narrator simply announces to the reader that for the sake of convenience he is translating a passage of the local dialect into standard French. In this way he prefaces, for example, the song which a group of torch bearing peasant boys are singing while traversing the country-side on their way to midnight Mass. "[Ils couraient] la campagne en chantant une antique chanson de nos pères, les Gaulois, qui se peut translater ainsi du patois." [3.] The reader is also helped by the frequent explanations of patois

1. See Jacquou le croquant, pp.249-430. For an opposing view, See Pierre Gamarra's article, "L'Homme des champs, l'homme des bois", Europe, May 1957, p.30. "[Jacquou] est exemplaire par sa justification constante [...] de la saveur locale, de la couleur locale sans laquelle nous tombons dans le vain folklore, dans la mièvrerie et l'artifice."

2. Jacquou le croquant, p.2.

3. Ibid., p.3. See also p.183 for a translation of La Guilloniaou (Guil'an-neuf), a song sung by Jacquou and his friends during New Year's Eve celebrations.

terms used. The Perigord custom of chabrol --- the drinking of wine from a soup bowl with the remains of one's meal --- is illustrated by a visiting pedlar: "Après avoir bu, le porte-balle nous offrit de la soupe encore, et, personne n'en voulant plus, il s'en servit une autre pleine assiette, après quoi il fit un second copieux „chabrol„, comme nous appelons le coup du médecin, bu dans l'assiette avec un reste de bouillon." [1] The inclusion of characteristic turns of phrase and local proverbs (invariably supplied by a certain Chevalier de Galibert) complete Le Roy's series of linguistic devices. [2] Certain confidential elucidations like the following add to the narrative a definite --- if undefinable --- charm: "Il neigeait toujours, „comme qui jette de la plume d'oie à grandes poignées„, pour parler ainsi que les bonnes femmes [...] A mesure que les gens rencontraient leur chemin, ils nous laissaient avec un: „A Dieu sois!„" [3]

Le Roy's frequent recourse to the description of natural surroundings does more than just enhance the rustic atmosphere of the work. He also used the rocky, inhospitable terrain of the part of the Dordogne known as "le Périgord noir" to complement his fictional characters. If Jacquou and his peasant cohorts are in the end little more than renegades the implication is that the countryside, which discourages farming while providing a natural refuge for thieves, is partly responsible. Nature is also frequently pressed into

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.74.

2. See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.134. "Combien de ces proverbes d'autrefois seraient complètement perdus, sans la mémoire de l'aimable chevalier de Galibert, qui en émaille ses propos, dans Jacquou?"

3. Jacquou le croquant, p.10.

the service of pathetic fallacy in an attempt to heighten this complicity between landscape and human activity. On the night when the nine-year-old Jacquou sets fire to the marquis' forest the reader is told that, "Des nuages grisâtres filaient au ciel, le temps était orageux, le vent soufflait chaud, sous les taillis, courbant les fougères et la palène." [1] Similarly, accompanying the meagre funeral procession of the priest Bonal, "Une bise aigre soufflait de l'est, faisant flotter le drap qui couvrait la caisse et soulevait nos cheveux. Des feuilles mortes, détachées des châtaigniers, tombaient sur le drap blanc, comme une marque de deuil des choses inanimées." [2]

Periodically Le Roy's artistic temperament got the better of his efforts to remain consistent with the perspective of his peasant narrator. Often it is simple anthropomorphism used in its traditional role to heighten atmosphere which tests the credibility of young Jacquou's observations. In this respect the admirable description of mother and son arriving at Périgueux to attend the father's trial for murder deserves to be reproduced at length. Although inconsonant with the nature of the hero, it is an effective piece of writing which shows to advantage Le Roy's real talent for manipulating language:

> Quelques-unes de ses maisons, baticollées en torchis avec des cadres de charpente, cahutes informes, lézardées, écaillées, tordues et déjetées de vieillesse, comme de pauvres bonnes femmes, se penchaient sur l'Ille où elles semblaient se précipiter. D'autres à côté ayant perdu leur aplomb, comme des femmes saoules, s'appuyaient sur la maison plus proche ou se soutenaient par

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.133.

2. Ibid., p.280.

> des béquilles énormes faisant contre-fort [...] Toutes ces maisons dissemblables [...] se pressaient sur le bord de l'Ille, curieuses de se mirer dedans. 1.

Closely allied to his evocation of the Périgord countryside were many of the picturesque customs and observances which Le Roy chose to include in his book. The frequent elaboration of bucolic idylls testify to the affectionate nostalgia with which he viewed the old rural society which even at the turn of the century was inexorably being modified by modern machines and attitudes. The following scene depicting Jacquou and the priest taking Communion to the sick is remarkable not only for its unabashed sentimentality but also for the absence of all indifference or hostility to things religious exhibited by the peasants of Guillaumin or Zola:

> Lorsqu'il fallait porter le bon Dieu à quelque malade, je m'en allais devant avec un falot, sonnant la clochette, et derrière le curé suivaient la demoiselle Hermine et quelque deux ou trois vieilles femmes du bourg, disant leur chapelet. Tandis que nous passions dans les chemins pierreux, les gens qui étaient à travailler par les terres faisaient planter leurs boeufs s'ils labouraient, ôtaient leur bonnet, se mettaient à genoux et disaient un Notre-Père pour le malade. Et des fois, au loin, au milieu des brandes, une bergère, oyant le son de la clochette, faisait taire son chien qui jappait, et, se mettant à genoux, priait aussi. 2.

There is no evidence here or elsewhere in the novel to suggest that Le Roy ever intended self-parody. It is therefore remarkable that such idealisation of peasant life should be found in a work whose central theme is the peasant's revolt against his situation. It is made even more curious when one considers the satirical use we noted of the "berger en culotte rose et

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.81.
2. Ibid., p.179.

bien poudré" found in the bedroom of Mlle Ponsie in Le Moulin du Frau. This is not the only occasion when Le Roy seemed to lose control of his writing, which could lead to some strange stylistic hybrids. One need only consider, for example, the unpleasant blend of naturalism and sentimentality in his description of Lina's suicide by drowning:

> Maintenant, tout était fini; elle était au fond de l'abîme, couchée dans quelque recoin de ces grottes aux eaux souterraines, et ce corps charmant, perdant toute forme humaine, tombait en décomposition, pour ne laisser sur le sable fin qu'un squelette destiné peut-être dans des milliers d'années, à fonder le système d'un savant de l'avenir, après quelque cataclysme terrestre. [1].

A certain ambiguity --- although on a much smaller scale --- can be detected in Le Roy's characterisation in this novel. Taken as a whole, admittedly, the characters are easily identifiable as representing good or evil and it is this function which will be examined first. The figures in Jacquou fall into one of two camps; either they are friends of the people or they persecute them. Lined up against the peasants are the local representatives of the 'establishment'. M. de Nansac, his régisseur Laborie and the official Church are all uncompromisingly evil and are seen to satisfy their own needs at the expense of those weaker than themselves. In this respect the praise we have noted from Gaston Roger for Le Roy's supposed willingness to portray peasant vices as well as virtues is quite misplaced.[2] The peasants are viewed as the dispossessed of this earth of whom advantage is taken at every turn by the likes of Laborie: "[...] M.Laborie était un homme dur, exigeant, injuste, qui

1. Jacquou le croquant, pp.372-373.

2. See Gaston Roger, "Eugène Le Roy et le régionalisme démocratique", Europe, 1 May 1953, p.110.

trompait les pauvres gens tant qu'il pouvait, faisant sauter un louis d'or ou un écu sur un compte de métayer, rapiant cinq sous à un miserable journalier, s'il ne pouvait faire davantage." [1]. Only the Marquis de Nansac, himself a stereotype of the reactionary nobleman of the Terreur Blanche has a more odious nature. In the habit of referring to the peasantry as "la paysantaille", and reminiscent of M. Gorlier in Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple, he has not one redeeming feature:

> C'était un amusement pour ce méchant de passer à cheval dans les blés épiés, avec ses gens; d'entrer dans les vignes avec les chiens qui mangeaient les raisins mûrs; de faire étrangler par sa meute un chien de bergère, ou une brébis, lorsqu'il avait fait buisson creux. Il fallait se ranger vitement sur son passage et saluer bien bas, sans quoi on était exposé à recevoir quelque bon coup de fouet. [2].

The Church, which had as much to gain from a restoration of the Ancien Régime as the nobles, stands squarely with the marquis and the other local notables. The narrator makes it clear that religion --- just like the pre-Revolutionary cult of Enlightenment --- is being used by the nobility to maintain a safe distance between themselves and the people:

> Depuis la chute de l'Empire [...] la religion était devenue pour la noblesse une affaire de parti. Les gentilshommes, philosophes avant la Révolution, affectaient maintenant des sentiments religieux pour mieux se séparer du peuple devenu jacobin et indévôt, tout comme autrefois ils étaient incrédules pour se distinguer du populaire encore englué dans la superstition. [3].

The general case having been stated, the glimpses provided of the Hierarchy and of particular priests confirm the situation.

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.28.
2. Ibid., p.303.
3. Ibid., p.306.

It is significant that when the mayor of Périgueux rudely informs the family of the father's death in custody it is one of the local priests who is standing beside him and who hears the widow's bitter reply:

> L'avant-veille de la Toussaint, le maire fit appeler ma mère, et lui dit brutalement devant le curé, qui était avec lui sur la place de l'église:
> --- Ton homme est mort là-bas, il y eut hier quinze jours; tu peux lui faire dire des messes.
> --- Les pauvres gens n'en ont pas besoin, repartit ma mère:ils font leur enfer en ce monde. [1].

The narrator further indulges his anticlericalism by reporting the priest's refusal to bury Jacquou's mother who dies from heartbreak and overwork. Le Roy having dwelt at length over the chapters on the woman's valiant efforts to earn enough money to keep her son fed, the priest's reasons for this refusal seem not only petty but evil: "--- Cette femme ne fréquentait pas l'église et n'a pas fait ses Pâques; elle reniait Dieu et la sainte Vierge; c'est une huguenote:il n'y a pas de prières pour elle." [2].

If the 'establishment' figures are seen as cruel anachronisms, the people are portrayed for the most part as innocent victims who, in an ideal world without the nobility and its allies, would return France to healthy government and sound morals. The hero Jacquou is ethically absolved from any criminal acts he might commit by the unreasonable actions of his social superiors. He is by nature a peacelover, as seen in the idyllic interludes in the Forêt Barade and on the farm with Bonal, who has had this quality eclipsed but not extinguished by historical circumstance. Further exoneration

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.117.
2. Ibid., p.144.

is given by considerations of heredity very much in the mould of Zola's concept of blood determinism. Jacquou has inherited his spirit of revolt against injustice from a father who was convicted of murdering one of its representatives and a grandfather who before the Revolution had instigated the burning of the château at Reignac and had been hanged for it: "L'esprit de révolte, qui avait causé la mort de l'ancien Ferral le Croquant, qui avait mené mon grand-père jusqu'au pied de la potence et fait mourir mon père aux galères [...] bouillonnait dans mes veines." [1].

Elsewhere when the people's behaviour is open to criticism Le Roy makes allowances for his characters by pleading another Zolaesque consideration: environmental conditioning. When the charcoal burner Jean, one of Jacquou's close friends, dies the young man prepares to take possession of his friend's cabin. It had been promised to him and is badly needed by the shelterless Jacquou. Some hitherto unknown family of the deceased suddenly appear, however, and vigorously lay claim to the property which they manage to appropriate. All trace of family mourning seems to disappear at the prospect of material gain. The narrator, looking back over the gulf of the intervening decades, excuses the man in the following terms:

> Ça n'était pas un mauvais homme, mais il était si pauvre que ce petit héritage lui semblait le Pérou: aussi lui et les siens furent d'abord consolés de la mort de l'oncle Jean.
>
> C'est, à mon avis, un des grands inconvénients de l'extrême pauvreté que d'étouffer ainsi les sentiments naturels entre parents. [2].

Such shortcomings are more than compensated in the various demonstrations --- alien to the peasants of Zola or even

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.312.

2. Ibid., pp.379-380.

Guillaumin --- of mutual support among the lower orders. Le Roy emphasises the sense of class solidarity born out of mutual suffering. The most striking, if melodramatic, illustration of this occurs while mother and son are making their way on foot to Périgueux for the trial. They spend a night in the dwelling of a peasant woman. The old wife at first will not hear of any payment for food and lodging but when Jacquou's mother insists, a nominal charge is made:

> Ma mère connut bien qu'elle la ménageait beaucoup; elle lui donna les dix sous en l'accertainant qu'elle se souviendrait toujours d'elle, et de sa bonté pour nous autres. La Minette fit aller ses bras et dit:
> --- Il faut bien que les pauvres s'entr'aident!
> Puis elles s'embrassèrent fort, ma mère et elle. [1].

Throughout the novel Jacquou's mother earns unqualified sympathy from the reader by her example of backbreaking toil silently endured and by the pathos of her simple, peasant faith. Her prayer to the Virgin for the deliverance of her husband is the most moving passage in the work and owes its effectiveness to the commonsensical 'woman to woman' approach taken to things supernatural. The petition takes up a page and cannot be reproduced here in its entirety. The following extract, however, conveys something of the appeal of this straightforward address to Our Lady and of Le Roy's ability to create dialogue as well as compelling description:

> Ayez pitié de moi, Sainte Vierge! Quelquefois j'ai bien oublié de vous prier, mais vous savez, les pauvres gens n'ont pas toujours le temps [...] Sauvez mon pauvre Martissou! Il n'est pas mauvais homme, ni coquin, il est seulement un peu vif. S'il a fait ce méchant coup, on l'y a poussé, sainte Vierge! Ce qui a fini de faire perdre patience à mon pauvre homme, c'est qu'il

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.76.

> savait de longtemps que ce gueux
> m'attaquait toujours; il l'avait ouï
> un jour de dedans le fenil. [1].

Such ambiguity in character that does arise in the novel is the result not of any confusion about what certain figures stand for but rather why they should possess certain views. The priest Bonal and the Chevalier de Galibert and his sister Hermine seem misplaced when one considers Le Roy's general attitude to both clergy and nobility. All three characters, however, stand firmly behind --- although they do not openly support --- Jacquou's fight against injustice. The priest and the woman, especially, are portrayed as 'saints'; the one devoting all his energy to his flock (and never taking any payment for his services) and the other dedicating herself to acts of kindness and charity among the local peasant families. In both cases the narrator makes it clear that they are an exception to the rule: "[...] Aux environs, ni même à beaucoup de lieues à la ronde, on ne trouvait guère de curés et de nobles comme ceux-ci." [2]. The confusion over Bonal's place in this novel is cleared somewhat by considering precisely what sort of priest Le Roy is presenting. He is certainly not identified with official dogma or any of the convoluted arguments for Church infallibility. He does not fit into the pattern of a Church which sees its role as a brake against the baser tendencies of the masses. In word and action he seems much more interested in Christ the Man than in Christ the God. In fact, he is not so much a priest as a humanist in a cassock and one suspects that had the novel been written in the second half of this century, he would at the very least

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.85.

2. Ibid., p.167.

have been a 'worker-priest' or, more likely, a social worker .

Hermine and her brother, although they are of the nobility, are both benefactors of the oppressed. The discrepancy between their generosity and the baseness of the rest of the local noblesse can be explained by the author's quite Balzacian perspective of rural society. He distinguished quite sharply between the old, 'true' nobility and the nouveau riche interlopers who had purchased social distinction after the Revolution. In some mystical way the old landed families were held to have an intimate link with the soil of France and, by extension, to exercise a benevolent proprietory interest in those who worked it. Le Roy appeared to be willing to gloss over the consideration that originally --- albeit over many centuries --- these 'old' families had themselves started by expropriating vast tracts of land. The new arrivals, like M. de Nansac, had no such historical claim, and their power was based on social pretensions fed by the accumulated capital of commerce. While presenting the list of injustices perpetrated by the marquis, the narrator points out that de Nansac's grandfather had been a mere "porteur d'eau" from Saint-Flour who had made good. He then makes explicit the implied comparison with Hermine and the Chevalier de Galibert: "Je fus content de savoir que les Nansac n'étaient pas des nobles de la bonne espèce; et, de vrai, lorsque je les comparais au chevalier et à sa soeur /...7 je ne pouvais pas m'empêcher de croire qu'il y avait deux races de nobles, les uns bons, les autres méchants." [1].

Although minor characters, Hermine and her brother do suggest through their historical link with the land the idealised role Nature has to play in Le Roy's world. When,

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.179.

for example, mother and son take refuge in the forest cabin, Jacquou runs free, spending his days climbing trees and eating the wild fruits and berries. The physical and intellectual effects on this enfant sauvage are both beneficial and evident: "Malgré tout, je profitais comme un arbre planté en bon terrain, et je devenais fort, car, quoique n'ayant que huit ans, j'en paraissais bien dix. Ma connaissance aussi s'était bien faite; je parlais avec ma mère de choses que les enfants ignorent d'ordinaire." [1].

Le Roy's concept of the terre consolatrice is a direct borrowing from Rousseau, as is the conviction that evil resides in whatever tends to pervert the natural law. Since Le Roy took it as given that the peasant was meant to work his own land and reap the rewards of his labour, those forces which prevented this --- the nobility and the Church --- had to be resisted. By implication, life in the towns and certainly in the capital was unnatural because it divorced the individual from Nature. It is not surprising, therefore, that the scenes of greatest stress for the family --- the mock trial and summary conviction of Jacquou's father --- should unfold in Périgueux. It is significant too that after being defrocked Bonal returns to a small parcel of land that had been in his family and begins to farm. The orphaned Jacquou accompanies him and takes to the rigours of peasant routine with incredible enthusiasm:

> Cette vie étroitement attachée à la terre me convenait [...] Les travaux pénibles de la saison estivale même me riaient [...] Ça me faisait du bien d'employer ma force, et quand le matin, ayant fauché un journal de pré, je voyais l'herbe humide de rosée, coupée régulièrement et bien ras, j'étais content. Alors, je prenais ma pierre à repasser, et j'aiguisais mon dail en sifflant un air de chanson. [2].

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.115.
2. Ibid., p.247.

As Jacquou's mentor, it is Bonal who directs the boy's education towards the lessons Nature can provide and it is Bonal, too, who moralises to the boy about the natural law in language that is typically Rousseauesque:"---Vois-tu Jacquou [...] l'homme est né pour travailler, c'est une loi de nature; et, cela étant, de tous les travaux, il n'en est pas de plus sains, de plus moralisants, que ceux de la terre; [...] vivre au milieu de la nature qui nous rappelle sans cesse au calme et à la modération des désirs, loin des villes où ce qu'on appelle le bonheur est artificiel, --- le sage n'en demande pas mieux." [1].

The lessons learnt at the knee of the priest are carried by Jacquou through life. After his marriage, when he becomes a charcoal burner, he continues to extol the virtues of the natural life in idealistic terms which remind one that, while Le Roy might have been of humble origins and raised amongst the peasantry, he had never himself been obliged to earn his living by the sweat of his brow. Just after the marriage and before children start to arrive at regular nine month intervals, Jacquou's wife would often travel to join him in whatever locality he happened to be working: "Le soir venu, nous soupions aux clartés du brasier, et ensuite noun nous couchions dans la cabane sur des fougères et des peaux de brebis [...] Je ne puis me tenir de le redire, c'était là une jolie vie, libre, saine et forte." [2].

It must be said that the love theme, although not elaborated at any length in this novel, does complement the emphasis on things natural. The wife's fecundity is the practical counterpart to her devotion to Jacquou and illustrates

1. Jacquou le croquant, pp.257-258.
2. Ibid., pp.432-433.

the link between love and responsibility in Le Roy's working class world. This is meant to contrast sharply with the sensual frivolity of the liaisons pursued at de Nansac's château, where love is replaced by sexual gratification. The ultimate fate of the two families is self-explanatory; the one prosperous and firmly rooted in the land, while the other is emotionally bankrupt and dispersed to Paris and beyond.

The central theme which holds the novel together remains that of active resistance to injustice and its eventual overthrow. Several of the guises in which this injustice is cloaked have already been discussed. There is one which, appearing in the opening scene of Jacquou, forges the thematic link with Charles-Louis Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant and Le Père Perdrix: Hunger. Although the significance of the abundance of good glimpsed while at the château to hear Mass does not fully register on the young Jacquou, it is his stomach which firsts hints to him that all is not well in this world: "Tout en mangeant cette boule de farine de maïs, pétrie à l'eau, cuite avec des feuilles de chou, sans un brin de lard dedans, et bien froide, je pensais à toutes ces bonnes choses vues dans la cuisine du château [...] Dans ma tête d'enfant, la question ne se posait pas bien clairement; mais, tout de même, il me semblait qu'il y avait là quelque chose qui n'était pas bien arrangé." [1] His lack of even the essential to support life is the first thing to bring home to the worker the injustice of his position. All political considerations are mere refinements and an extension of this initial realisation. It was, as we have seen, the crucial importance of bread which allowed Philippe to elevate it to the level of symbol in his works and which fills with meaning seemingly trivial incidents in Jacquou.

1. Jacquou le croquant, pp.13-14.

When, for example, the boy's father cuts open a dark, stale tourte, which is their staple, to reveal a mouldy centre, the disaster this represents for the family is understandable: "Le pain, même très noir, dur et grossier, était une nourriture précieuse pour ceux qui vivaient en bonne partie de châtaignes, de pommes de terre et de bouillie de blé d'Espagne [...] Pour le paysan, ce pain, obtenu par tant de sueur et de peines, avait quelque chose de sacré." [1] Successful revolt against all the injustice implied by this opening sequence is the significance to be drawn from Jacquou's narrative, and it is precisely its triumphant tone which sets this novel apart from any other work considered in this thesis.

1. Jacquou le croquant, p.22.

Nicette et Milou and Les Gens d'Auberoque.

These two works are grouped together as essentially romans de moeurs which, while much less important than either Le Moulin du Frau or Jacquou le croquant, are of interest as records of daily provincial life in nineteenth-century France. They also exhibit certain stylistic and thematic similarities which allow them to be examined together for the purpose of this thesis.

Nicette et Milou was written between August and December 1900 and first published by Calmann-Lévy the following year. [1] The work is an amalgam of two lengthy nouvelles; "La Petite Nicette" and "Le Grand Milou", with only a tenuous link connecting them.

Both stories are third person narratives, the action of "La Petite Nicette" beginning in 1822 with the arrival of the two-day-old Nicette at the foundling shelter in Hautefort. The plot is simple and appears to progress inevitably towards the triumph of evil over good. As willing as ever to show the innate purity of the peasant character, Le Roy contrasts with it the attendant vice in other elements of rural society. Nicette is fostered by the peasant La Guillone, a wetnurse whose own baby has just died and she develops into an attractive and dutiful young girl who more than repays La Guillone's kindness. The cloud on the horizon who will destroy this harmony is a certain M.Rudel, the detested "officier de santé". His knowledge of even rudimentary hygiene is limited, while greed for money is exceeded only by his voracious sexual appetite.

1. It is to this edition that all textual references are made. Subsequent publications were by Les Editions du Périgord Noir (Montignac) 1947 and by Livre Club Diderot (with Le Moulin du Frau, Jacquou le croquant and Les Gens d'Auberoque) Paris 1972.

It is with his son Jean, who is the opposite of the father in every respect, that Nicette falls in love. The romance is soon shattered, however, when the sixteen-year-old girl is raped by the father who has had designs on her for years. Several months later she drowns herself and the medical inquest, headed by Rudel himself as the district health officer, reveals that the girl is pregnant. The Church refuses to bury the suicide and the story ends with the local priest preaching his Sunday sermon on the evils of promiscuity and warning the young girls of his parish that they will end up like Nicette if, like her, they surrender to their passions.

In "Le Grand Milou" the two links with the preceding story are the hospice at Hautefort and the odious M.Rudel. It is to the orphanage that Milou is brought by the same woman who had taken Nicette. Barbot and his wife are desperately poor peasants who take Milou to foster for the four francs a month allowance it brings in. They already have six children of their own and the squalor in which they live is described at length. Growing up in this environment, Milou embarks at an early age on the criminal course his life is to take. He learns to pick pockets and poach game in order to feed himself and aid the family. On one occasion he is caught stealing eggs from the mayor's henhouse, is beaten and given this portentous warning: "Foutu petit coquinassou! Tu crèveras aux galères!"

Although skilled in both begging and thieving by the age of fifteen, he takes a job as a miner and first comes into contact with Mlle Céleste Nougarède. She is an attractive thirty-five-year-old spinster who owes her considerable wealth to ownership of mines and métairies. She remains unmarried because she lost her virginity to the ubiquitous M.Rudel when she was seventeen. Milou is eventually taken on as a servant

in her household. He becomes progressively more debauched as he begins to drink in excess and frequent the brothels in Périgueux. His criminal tendencies are pursued with the local villain, Verdil, with whom he goes off on sprees of pickpocketing. Finally he betrays Céleste's trust and steals from her in order to finance his pleasures. It is only by sheltering in the bottom of a deserted mineshaft --- reminiscent of Jeanlin's refuge in Zola's Germinal --- that he manages to escape detection. Shortly thereafter the young man graduates to armed robbery and kills twice in the course of his actions. He is finally caught, tried, and guillotined. A final twist to this distinctly linear plot is provided by Céleste's discovery that Milou, for whom she had developed a passion, is her illegitimate son by M.Rudel whom she herself had had placed at the Hautefort orphanage.

There was almost no immediate critical reaction to the publication of Nicette et Milou. Following the peasant epics, Le Moulin du Frau and Jacquou le croquant, this book appeared of little significance. It does, in fact, add little to the picture of Périgord life already given by the two major works. Henry Bordeaux, in La Revue hebdomadaire, was alone in drawing attention to it. The general tone of his article was admiring, if vague. As far as questions of style were concerned he wrote: "Le style? Le goût du pain bis quand on a faim. M.Eugène Le Roy est en voie de devenir le conteur du Périgord comme George Sand le fut du Berry." [1] He was, however, critical of two things. First, he regretted an excess of what he called "romantisme" at the end of "Le Grand Milou" and secondly, he thought the anti-clerical element both too strong and outdated.

1. Henry Bordeaux, La Revue hebdomadaire, July 1901, p.428.

In his book Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, Gaston Guillaumie sees the work as primarily concerned with the fate of abandoned children in France before the passing of any social legislation to protect them. Le Roy's story of the cases of Nicette and Milou expose two arguments. The first is that the family unit is essential to the welfare of both the individual and society. It is only when this unit breaks down that the problem of abandoned children arises. The second is that the Public Assistance system intended to provide for such children was inadequate and open to abuse by unscrupulous individuals like M.Rudel. [1] In the particular case of Milou it would be unreasonable to expect him to become anything other than a criminal considering his lack of education and the environment in which he grew up: "La déchéance progressive des criminels est une conséquence de l'ignorance où ils ont été plongés, et du défaut d'éducation première." [2]

Pauline Newman, identifying the same two arguments as does Guillaumie, adds that Nicette et Milou was the first novel in which the author's humanitarian preoccupations expressed themselves in sociology rather than history. She is also aware of the indulgence with which Le Roy treats his peasant subject, even when the individual is committing criminal acts. Lack of education, however, is not the cause but rather a symptom of the general malaise which abject poverty creates. Although in certain circumstances poverty might be seen as ennobling, the misère in which so many workers lived was capable of perverting the individual's natural character: "On a tendance à oublier que dans la France paysanne du dix-neuvième siècle, la pauvreté

1. See Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.51.

2. Ibid., p.55.

était un joug, une espèce de tare qui transformait les êtres, et les figeait dans l'obsession de la mort. C'était un combat de tous les jours, un cauchemar abject et sordide, dont on ne se réveillait jamais." [1].

Of the two halves of this work it is "La Petite Nicette" which impresses least, lacking even that minimal character development of "La Grand Milou". The figures of Nicette and M.Rudel, especially, are two dimensional to the point that they lose any claim to independence and become allegorical characters in a struggle between good and evil.

The young girl is presented as the epitome of innocence and obedience, the portrait being completed in the idyllic episode of the romance with Jean Rudel. Although the idealisation of young love is standard in Le Roy's works (with the exception of Mademoiselle de la Ralphie) the tone here is more charged than usual, with the precious verging occasionally on the melodramatic. When Jean first declares his love they swear to be true to each other ("[...] Je suis à toi, ma Nicettou, et tu es à moi, à la vie, à la mort!") and seal their oath by sucking blood from each other's thumb which they have pricked with a needle. [2].

M.Rudel, irredeemably evil, is seen as a magnification of the cruelty and incompetence in other representatives of rural medicine encountered in novels like Le Moulin du Frau and Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant. The reader is here literally confronted with a vampire whose remedy for every ill is bleeding; not because he believes in it as a cure but because he

1. Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.130.

2. See Nicette et Milou, Paris 1901, p.86.

can charge the peasants more for this than an ordinary visit. His sexual appetite is sated with any female he desires and as the owner of five métairies he exercises what is bluntly put as the "droit de jambage des anciens seigneurs." [1]. Le Roy draws an effective comparison between methods of raising pigs and Rudel's practice of always having two or three young girls maturing, ready for him to take when they are fully developed. While she remains very young a girl remains safe from his advances: "La petite Nicette, qui est dans ses quinze ans et demi, un peu mince, maigrelette, ne risque rien à présent: M.Rudel lui donne le temps de venir en bon point [...] Dans les alentours, il a toujours comme ça deux ou trois jolies drolettes en mue qu'il a remarquées, et dont il surveille la croissance." [2].

By painting characters white or black Le Roy exposes occasionally the baser nature of the peasantry he is usually unwilling to portray. The following description of one local boy who harasses Nicette displays the physical as well as the mental flaws in the peasant type: "C'est une manière „d'homme des bois„, c'est-à-dire de grand singe, laid à faire avorter une honnête femme; mal bâti, avec un gros corps, de courtes jambes, de longs bras qui lui viennent au genou et un goitre de la grosseur d'un oeuf d'oie. Ce Bourretou est idiot, et puis méchant comme un âne rouge." [3].

"La Petite Nicette" lacks the usual abundance of historical vignettes and geographical detail found elsewhere

1. Nicette et Milou, p.62.
2. Ibid., pp.70-71.
3. Ibid., p.32.

in Le Roy's writing. What is included, however, as relief from the progression of the sombre plot are frequent descriptions of local customs and beliefs. Here the author draws heavily from a store of peasant superstitions --- like the comic ill-feeling towards any family owning a billy goat, considered the devil incarnate --- in order to enhance the illusion of authenticity. Although implied criticism is certainly present of those who abandon children and of the system set up to care for them, "La Petite Nicette" remains primarily a moral tale of how the power of the rich inevitably triumphs over the poor.

"Le Grand Milou" is rather more challenging reading, in that there is some character development at work in the boy Milou. The innocence of childhood, however, does not last long in the Barbot household and the transition to vice is a rapid one. The concept of a determinism controlled by human and physical environment plays an important part in Milou's downfall, and Le Roy firmly establishes both by frequent descriptions of surroundings. One of the best conveys the sordidness of the cabin in which the family lives and suggests also the promiscuity bred by overcrowding:

> Dans le coin opposé, une [...] paillasse est jetée sur une litière de brande, à cause de l'humidité de la terre. L'homme et la femme se couchent dans le lit, un de leurs droles en travers aux pieds, Milou et Botille à côté de la mère, au risque de les étouffer. De l'autre côté, où est la paillasse, sous une couverture trouée, se blottissent pêle-mêle les autres droles, garçons et filles, et bientôt tout dort dans la misérable demeure des Barbot. 1.

The implication is obvious. The reader is to make allowances for the morals and behaviour of any individual whose daily life is confined to such an environment. If the peasants occasionally behave like animals it is because they are treated like

1. Nicette et Milou, pp.156-157.

animals. Similarly, the influences at work on the young Milou in the various criminals, with whom he spends much time, are pleaded to exculpate the boy from the shame of his ultimate fate. The reader is explicitly reminded that, "C'est une nature gâtée par la misère et les mauvais exemples, capable de tout." [1.]

The regional flavour of the narrative is sustained by repeated reliance on the picturesque customs of the locals and especially those associated with specific festivals. Much is made of Midsummer's Day celebrations, for example, with the lighting of the fire in every village ("[...] antique fête solsticiale de la religion druidique, que les prêtres chrétiens se sont appropriée ne pouvant la détruire [...]") and the ritual production of crosses made from wild flowers which are hung above the doors of the stables.

"Le Grand Milou" is much more easily identifiable than "La Petite Nicette" as Le Roy's work, for in it are to be found many favourite stylistic and thematic elements. Some are less welcome than others. The predilection for lengthy discourses on subjects of purely regional interest is unfortunate. His extensive travels around the province as percepteur allowed Le Roy to indulge his passion for recording the Périgord flora and fauna which intrude clumsily into his fictional work. On one occasion as the Barbots are returning from Périgueux to Temple, the hamlet in which they live, the reader is subjected to a three page treatise on indigenous plant- and wildlife. Such needless interruptions to the narrative point the main weakness of regionalist writing which undermines any claim it might have to possess a universal appeal as literature.

The historical 'asides' scattered throughout the text attest to the author's knowledge of Périgord's past. An

1. Nicette et Milou, p.259.

explanation of the etymology of Temple, for example, is deemed necessary as the Barbots make their homeward journey: "Le bourg est vieux, très vieux. Il tire son origine d'une ancienne préceptorerie de l'ordre du Temple qui dépendait de la commanderie de Condat." [1]. Similarly, in the course of an extended description of the countryside around Hautefort, Le Roy draws --- quite incongruous --- attention to a refuse dump to exploit its historical significance: "Là était l'ancienne voirie où l'on portait les bêtes crevées. Là fut jetée par le bourreau de Périgueux, sur l'ordre du curé du lieu, et mangée aux chiens, une noble huguenote, Suzanne de Mouneix demoiselle de Labrousse, morte dans la nuit du 27 au 28 décembre 1688." [2]. Such insertions may have some intrinsic interest to historians of the Dordogne but serve further to limit this work to its specific provincial context.

The language itself used reinforces this impression, as Le Roy appears here less successful than elsewhere in his writing in blending dialect with standard French. Although he does on occasion manage this linguistic grafting ("[...] Milou s'en va trouver la petite Zuzou qui „l'espère„ ["qui l'attend"]"), and does incorporate many local turns of phrase ("Les habitants sont non pas riches, mais comme on dit, ils ont du foin dans leurs sabots") usually the dialectal elements are cumbersome and distracting. Of one of M.Rudel's visits to see Nicette, the reader is left to puzzle over the meaning of the following: "Sur les deux heures de la vesprée, „housé„ pour sa tournée, le voilà qui attache sa jument „pécharde„ à une „charrière„, comme on appelle ces claires-voies des baradis, et entre." [3].

1. Nicette et Milou, p.159.
2. Ibid., p.167.
3. Ibid., p.46.

As Henry Bordeaux acknowledged, the melodramatic plays too great a role in the development of the plot and damages the credibility Le Roy presumably wanted to attach to his presentation of the social problems of poverty and abandoned children. Milou, on mounting the scaffold for the guillotine, is made to declaim: "Que le feu du ciel écrase ceux qui m'ont fait et puis abandonné!" [1]. Others, driven to despair by the inevitable fate of Milou, are driven insane or, like Nicette, kill themselves. Suzou, Milou's sweetheart, roams pregnant and quite mad through the countryside endlessly repeating his name while Mlle Céleste hangs herself in her bedchamber. Anti-clericalism, too, is blatant and over used. The end of the novel is an attack on the hypocrisy of the Church who tailors her principles to suit financial considerations. The two suicides in the novel, Nicette and Céleste, are treated in different ways by the ecclesiastical authorities. The penniless peasant girl is buried without a coffin in unconsecrated ground while Céleste, thanks to her family's money, is laid to rest with all the Catholic trimmings.

Les Gens d'Auberoque was originally to be entitled "La Ruine d'Auteroche", and it was written between 1895 and 1896 and published by Calmann-Lévy in 1906. [2]. In it Le Roy turns his attention from the countryside to the town to undertake a detailed examination of life there. It is the moeurs of the

1. Nicette et Milou, p.301.
2. It is from this edition that all textual references are taken. A subsequent edition was published in 1935 by Plon.

petty bourgeois, especially, which come under scrutiny. There is almost no plot, the scant action which does exist being worked around the movements of the main character Georges Lefrancq.

The third person narrative begins in November 1866 with the arrival of the twenty-eight-year-old Lefrancq as the new "receveur de l'enregistrement" in the Périgord town of Auberoque. It is through his eyes that a succession of towns-people are presented and evaluated, and that the inevitable gossip and minor scandals in small town life are recorded. The only significant things to happen to Lefrancq are his civil marriage to Michelette, the penniless orphan of the former locksmith, and the loss of his post which was presumably due to the scandal of his refusal to marry in Church. The events of the final chapter, immediately following Lefrancq's dismissal, take place after an interval of twenty years when he and his family revisit the town. The sole purpose of this chapter is to accelerate the effects of the process of moral disintegration in the town recorded previously, as the final ends of many of its principal inhabitants are listed.

At over two hundred pages in both editions, this novel as a succession of psychological portraits is too long and could well have made its point in under half this length. Rachilde, however, writing in the Mercure de France upon the novel's publication, felt that neither length nor lack of plot weakened the work: "L'oeuvre n'a pas à s'inquiéter d'une intrigue, car toute sa force réside dans sa langue sobre et vigoureuse, dans ses paysages clairs, ses types naturels, pris au moment même de leur geste coutumier." [1] She also isolated

1. Mercure de France, 1 January 1907, p.118.

a developing tendency towards naturalism of which we have already seen an indication in Nicette et Milou. This will be examined later in the discussion of Les Gens d'Auberoque, but Rachilde was clearly overstating the case when she declared unequivocally that Le Roy was a naturalist, "[...] un des meilleurs, des plus solides." In their assessments, both Pauline Newman and Gaston Guillaumie emphasise the obvious; that Les Gens d'Auberoque is a microcosm of Le Roy's view of nineteenth-century French society. [1].

If the work does represent society in miniature it does also, like Madame Bovary, to which Guillaumie compares it, concentrate on one particular stratum. Although both peasants and nobility make brief appearances here, it is the provincial petite bourgeoisie and their way of life which is examined in Les Gens d'Auberoque. The examination is hardly a dispassionate one, as Le Roy found in the middle-class mentality those characteristics with which he had the least sympathy. The pursuit of money was the chief evil which, once embarked upon, induced naturally decent human beings to compromise any principle in order to obtain it. This applied to institutions as well as to individuals, and if the bourgeoisie happily fawned upon the nobility out of snobbery and a thinly disguised hope of financial gain, so too did the Church support the local notables in order to reinforce her position. Free thought and Republican ideals --- both essential to Le Roy --- were sacrificed whenever expedient by the very group who had most benefitted from the Revolution itself.

From the opening description of the town and its environs it is made clear what is the predominant social force in this

1. See Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.122 and Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.64.

part of Périgord: "Au-dessus des plus hautes maisons de la bourgade et de quelques rares jardins /.../ s'élevaient les remparts de la vaste esplanade du château, et au-dessus de l'esplanade encore, se dressait la masse gigantesque de la vielle forteresse féodale des seigneurs d'Auberoque." [1]. It is the old ideas which are in the ascendancy here, with the châtelaine and her patronage the most important considerations in the eyes of the locals. Again, Le Roy relies heavily on description of the town to establish a dominant atmosphere for this novel. Although there is a fleeting reference made to a traditional and reassuring view of a local community sheltering in the protective shadow of its castle, ("/les/ maisons groupées au pied de l'antique forteresse, comme des poussins autour de la mère /.../") the great preponderance of description relevant to the town makes it clear that the true image is much more sinister. The following passage is reproduced at length because the picture of Auberoque which emerges here owes much of its force to cumulative effect and because it helps explain Rachilde's enthusiasm for Le Roy as one of the great naturalists:

> Dans les petits recoins, les culs-de-sac servant de latrines, des immondices s'entassaient avec des débris de tuiles, des tessons de bouteilles et de pots. Dans les cours étroites, des pailles et des bruyères pourissaient avec les détritus de ménage, sous les excréments. A côté des portes, à proximité des puits, des tas de fumier en fermentation dégagaient leurs émanations infectes et laissaient couler leur purin dans la rue /.../ La vieille halle au pavé noir et gluant, où le boucher d'à côté tuait les bouvillons, servait aussi de pissoirs aux voisins et d'abri aux cochons et à la poulaille lorsqu'il pleuvait. L'autre boucher tuait ses bêtes dans une écurie, d'où le sang découlait sur le vieux chemin /.../ Sur la place même /.../ devant la boutique du

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, Paris 1906, p.13.

> perruquier, des poignées de cheveux noirs, blonds, châtains, gris, produit de la tonte humaine, rejetés par le balai, étaient dispersés par le vent. [1]

Such descriptive passages emphasising the sordid are not uncommon in this novel and the majority of them relate to the physical environment of the town itself. Le Roy is not always in control of this facet of his style and, especially when he deals with the despised bourgeoisie, mere bad taste in much of the description invites the criticism that his intention was to shock. When the mayor of Auberoque commits suicide --- an increasingly inevitable part of any of Le Roy's plots --- after being ruined on the Stock Market, "[...] il se cassa la tête d'un coup de pistolet, qui fit jaillir au plafond le peu de cervelle qu'il avait." [2] The familiar elements of sang and milieu are also present to explain character, lending some credibility to Rachilde's claims for Le Roy as a naturalist. When M.Faguette, the town's chemist and one of the very few honnêtes gens, attempts to explain the local society to the newcomer Lefrancq, he does so in these terms: "La dépression de caractère causée par la tyrannie seigneuriale est devenue héréditaire et n'a fait qu'empirer avec le temps." [3] Le Roy has here employed together two of the strings to his thematic bow; namely, that social inequality is a source of human ills and that the physical effects of such inequality can be passed from one generation to the next. That the author's grasp of even the rudimentary contemporary understanding of genetics was tenuous did not deter him, as it had not Zola, from employing a conception of hereditary determinism. Milieu and moment,

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, pp.16-17.
2. Ibid., p.309.
3. Ibid., p.54.

too, are exploited for their determining properties. The châtelaine, for example, is seen to understand only that part of the peasant character determined by a centuries old history of poverty and living on the margin of life and death: "/Elle/ ne connaissait du paysan que cette âpre convoitise de la terre, que cette économie tenace de sous empilés l'un sur l'autre, que cette obstination héroïque dans la marche vers le but poursuivi." [1].

Allied to the naturalist overtones of the novel is a general sense of disillusionment which has gradually been developing since Le Moulin du Frau. Even the workers, who are generally seen as repositories of virtue and used as foils against middle-class vice, more and more often betray major character flaws. The viciousness of the attack against Lefrancq when he marries both outside his class and the Church is nowhere greater than from the ranks of the people themselves: "Les ouvrières, les filles du peuple, qui auraient dû être fières /d'une/ absence de préjugés, raçaient de ce qu'elles appelaient la „chance„ de Michelette, et, dans leur exaspération jalouse, furieuses de n'avoir pas été choisies, l'„habillaient„ avec cette crudité de langage si révoltante chez la femme sans éducation excitée par la colère." [2]. Because most of the novel concerns the town and its inhabitants the general tone is pessimistic, as Le Roy attacks all those elements antithetical to his own social beliefs. The atmosphere is made even heavier by the inclusion of scenes in which the author seems wilfully to indulge a tendency towards the melancholy seen before in his writing. In particular, he has a preference for protracted death bed scenes which allow him to dwell either on extreme pain, as with the mother's death in Jacquou le croquant, the

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.165.
2. Ibid., pp.292-293.

serene resignation of Uncle Sicaire in Le Moulin du Frau, the futility of Latheulade's demise in Mademoiselle de la Ralphie or, in Les Gens d'Auberoque, the mawkish sentimentality of the inventor Desvars' death.

The downward trend of pessimism is not, however, the unrelieved descent into despair found in Zola or the Goncourts. Le Roy's picture is painted black only to allow those values of which he himself approves to shine more brightly. A reader of his earlier novels will know what significance to attach to the hostile portrait drawn of Mme Chaboin, the present incumbent at the château. Her greed and snobbery appear all the worse for having their foundations in a fortune acquired by fraudulent business dealings. More significantly, the title of comtesse she has taken for herself has no connection with the ancient nobility for which, as we have seen in Jacquou, Le Roy bore a grudging respect. It is a papal title which Mme Chaboin --- "cette ancienne gardienne d'oies" --- has purchased to subdue completely a local populace already dazzled by her wealth. Of the bourgeois townspeople there is hardly a sentence written in their defence. The following lines about their capacity for malicious gossip are typical of the treatment they receive:

> On ne s'imagine pas combien le défaut de sujets d'entretien et l'indigence d'esprit rend les habitants des petites localités impitoyables pour leurs voisins affligés par un malheur. Une mort, une faillite, une condamnation, un accident conjugal, une perte d'argent, une fille mise à mal, sont autant de proies sur lesquelles ils se jettent avec la férocité de bêtes affamées. Un proverbe du pays exprime cette triste vérité: „Lorsqu'un arbre est tombé, chacun y va faire son fagot.„ [1].

Nothing could be more divorced from the spirit of entr'aide which exists amongst the peasantry which Le Roy has nurtured in all his previous work.

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.202.

As foils to these unsympathetic characters stand the representatives of the lower orders. The honesty and common sense of figures like Gardet the blacksmith and the mason Surgeac contrast with the scheming of the obsequious middle class, determined to ally themselves ever closer with the château. Unwilling to trust the reader to draw this distinction, the narrator insists that, "[...] s'il y a encore ici quelques sentiments généreux, quelques hommes de caractère, c'est dans le peuple qu'il faut les chercher." [1] Despite the considerable pessimism of this novel, the optimistic and idealistic have not been displaced. Man remains a noble beast, but one who forfeits his humanity in the measure that he renounces his links with Nature and sets out to climb the social ladder. Marriage and family life, too, are seen as extensions of the natural law which turn the individual away from selfish contemplation of his own interests and towards the welfare of others. When Lefrancq and Michelette return to Auberoque it is triumphantly, with a large number of children in tow. It is from within the safety and implied superiority of their family circle that they can observe the town and the final moral and physical decline of many of its principal inhabitants. In one of the final scenes, the Lefrancqs and the Farguettes enjoy a déjeuner sur l'herbe in suitably idyllic surroundings while numerous young children cavort around them. The conversation turns philosophically --- and implausibly --- to the meaning of happiness, and once again it is a pure transcription of Rousseau which emerges:

> --- Comme tous ces plaisirs simples et sans apprêt sont meilleurs que ces jeux étudiés et prétentieux dont se récréent les enfants des riches, dans des parcs

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.57.

> bien peignés! disait M.Lefrancq.
> --- Oui, répondit M.Farguette; en fait de jeux comme en fait de travaux, plus on se rapproche de la nature, mieux on s'en trouve.
> --- Et les meilleurs amusements, ajoutait Madame Lefrancq, sont ceux où, comme dans les vendanges, le travail se mêle au plaisir.
> --- C'est plein de sagesse, ce que vous dites là, Michelette /.../ [1].

The difference between this novel and Nicette et Milou, however, is that here the 'naturism' is triumphant against the background of the general decline of Auberoque, while in the earlier work it was treated defensively as a palliative against dominant bourgeois vice.

As we have seen elsewhere, allied with those forces which pervert the natural law stands the Church. In this novel the attack is made directly by the narrator and not at one remove through the unchristian actions of particular priests, as in Nicette et Milou or the machinations of the Hierarchy in Jacquou le croquant. The Church of Rome in this novel is held to be the root cause of what the narrator perceives as the contemporary climate of intolerance: "L'hérédité d'une longue succession de siècles a tellement imprégné la nation française des haines et de l'esprit d'intolérance de l'Eglise romaine, que des esprits sceptiques, des voltairiens avérés, des hommes sans pratique aussi bien que sans foi, n'avaient pu se défendre à l'endroit de cette incrédule logique, d'une antipathie qui allait jusqu'à l'injustice." [2].

This work, like the others, suffers from a regionalist's preoccupation with local history and topography. Here more than elsewhere, however, the insertion of long descriptive passages appears almost compulsive, with the author caring

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.331.
2. Ibid., p.312.

little about the disruptive effect on his narrative. If the novel is too long, it is chiefly because of these unnecessary 'specialist' digressions. [1] On the whole, the use of patois is much reduced in a work devoted chiefly to middle-class moeurs. It is, however, used when the peasants make an appearance and is a convenient device further to distance them and the 'natural' existence they lead from the corrupt bourgeois. During the laying of the corner stone for the new Church in Auberoque someone throws a bag of confetti over the crowd. "--- Qu'es ago? s'écriaient les paysans. --- Que diable est ceci? disaient les messieurs." [2]

More than any other of Le Roy's novels, Les Gens d'Auberoque is weakened by its contrived and artificial construction. Setting out to portray the customs and morals of bourgeois society in microcosm at Auberoque, the author parades in front of the reader a series of stylised, two dimensional characters, each one representative of a trait in the middle-class mentality. In the van comes Mme Chaboin, the parvenue, followed closely by such figures as the vulgar and stupid Grosjac, the local veterinary, by M.Fronssac the mendacious court clerk ("Il mentait d'ailleurs ingénument, sans malice, sans mauvaise intention, naturellement, comme un pommier porte des pommes") and by the scrofulous and dishonest tax collector, M.Monturel. The final chapter, especially, is used as a reckoning to redress social injustices. While developing lengthy scenes of marital

1. See for example pp.328-329 which are little more than a travelogue of Périgord Noir. Lefrancq and family embark upon a sightseeing tour of the region and the narrative is quite openly a photographic record of everything they see, complete with etymology of local place names.

2. Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.245.

bliss around Lefrancq and family, many of the villains are punished in a quite improbable manner. The hypocritical old priest, Camirat, dies a paralytic, Grosjac ends up in a lunatic asylum as a result of too much absinthe, and Mme Chaboin herself, "[...] a fini, il y a quelques années, dans une riche maison de santé, neurasthénique et maniaque, quasi folle." [1]. The châtelaine's demise is, significantly, brought about by frustrated social ambition. She begins to decline after realising that nothing she can do will gain her acceptance by the local nobility who forgive her the origins of neither her money nor her title.

1. Les Gens d'Auberoque, p.317.

Mademoiselle de la Ralphie and L'Ennemi de la mort.

The first of Le Roy's two novels published posthumously was begun as early as 1894, completed two years later with several minor alterations to plot made in 1902. Although it appeared serially in La Petite République (26 February - 26 April 1906) it was not issued in one volume until 1921 when published by Rieder. [1].

Even if it did not follow the almost plotless Les Gens d'Auberoque, this novel would still appear excessively episodic and melodramatic. For the first time Le Roy's concern in his writing with social issues is very much subordinate to intricate psychological studies. His preference for exposing injustice in the rural community or satire on the shallowness of the middle classes is momentarily checked here as he develops another of Rousseau's axioms; namely, that love plays its part in the natural law and respects no artificial class barriers. Amid the various subplots and digressions running through this work, Mademoiselle de la Ralphie is chiefly the psychological study of a young aristocrat who allowed her inborn class prejudices to frustrate natural emotions.

The third person narrative begins five years into the reign of Louis-Philippe and is centred around the château de Guersac. It is the family seat of M. du Jarry de la Ralphie, a widower and the father of Valérie who is ten years old as the action begins. The male protagonist, Damase, is an enfant trouvé and a servant in the château. He is five years Valérie's senior and secretly in love with her. He changes hands and

1. It is this 1921 edition that has been used for the purposes of this thesis. One republication of the work was made by Rieder in 1934.

enters the employ of a M.Boyssier, a notary in the town of Fontagnac where Valérie is sent to board with the nuns. [1.]

While still at the château, Damase had been allowed to attend lessons given to Valérie and other children of good families and his subsequent ability to read and write affords him a modest rise up the social ladder. He makes himself so useful that he quickly becomes a clerk and then a minor colleague of the notary. His success is symbolised by his admission to the dining room of M. and Mme Boyssier, and the lady of the house gradually falls in love with him. This love becomes a physical obsession and the account of her transition from faithful wife to impassioned lover is a psychological tour de force and one of the most impressive aspects of the novel. News of the liaison reaches Valérie in the convent and initiates a fierce internal struggle between the forces of class prejudice and the realisation that she is jealous of Mme Boyssier.

Contemporaneous with these psychological complications is the developing friendship between Damase and the aged Latheulade. The counterpart to the socialist tailor Lajarthe in Le Moulin du Frau, he was the former president of the Revolutionary committee in Fontagnac and instils in Damase Le Roy's own Jacobin principles. The young man volunteers for military service and is posted to North Africa. There he distinguishes himself in campaigns, is decorated and rises to sous-officier level. He returns to France to become Valérie's lover who in the meantime has discovered that she has royal

1. "Dans la petite ville de Fontagnac, il faut certainement reconnaître Montignac-sur-Vézère, la vieille cité, que Le Roy a tant aimée, dans les archives de laquelle il a si longtemps fouillé." (Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.66.)

blood, her grandfather having married one of the illegitimate daughters of Louis XV.

The setting changes to Toulon when Valérie retires there to have Damase's child. Both partners accept that their inequality of caste precludes marriage, and Valérie registers the child alone and returns with it to Guersac to continue the family name. Damase is sent back to Africa. News soon comes that he has been killed in action and a second catastrophe arrives when Valérie's small son, too, dies. This marks a watershed in her health of both body and morals as, once recovered from this double shock, she commences a bizarre descent into her final madness. She develops a passion for the young muscular priest Sagnol and later, as the downward trend continues, for the physically repulsive Jules Tessonnier who is one of her servants. Finally she becomes so violent that she must be confined to a lunatic asylum where she ends her days caged like an animal.

Writing in La Revue hebdomadaire, Edmond Jaloux compared Mademoiselle de la Ralphie with such 'socialist' works of George Sand as Mauprat and Le Compagnon du Tour de France. The hero Damase, especially, "comme les ouvriers beaux parleurs de George Sand, il a leur foi républicaine, leur noble égalitarisme et leur anticléricalisme vieillot." [1]. Although generally endorsing the novel, he did criticise the sordidness of some of the episodes and the naturalism with which descriptions were elaborated. He did, however, try to exculpate the author by adding that rarely were such elements gratuitous; that they were to be seen as a natural extension of the harshness of the Périgord landscape itself. A more severe criticism was reserved

1. La Revue hebdomadaire, September 1921, p.220.

for the hero Damase. Jaloux found him too perfect to be credible and a stereotype of all that Le Roy himself admired: the rise from humble background through hard work, his ardent republicanism, and his rationalism and anticlericalism. Even Damase's sexual adventures did not diminish the morality of this character insofar as it is always the women who do the chasing. While admiring the psychological portrait of Valérie in the confrontation of class pride and carnal passion, Jaloux admitted that "/Damase/ nous agace un peu par sa perfection." [1].

Jacques de Lacretelle also judged the heroine's emotional struggle to be the novel's supreme achievement. It was only effective, however, because Le Roy had managed it without resorting to the sentimental. What Valérie feels for Damase is not a mawkish infatuation but a physical passion which ends up destroying both her body and mind: "Ce qu'elle ressent n'est pas le désir vague de l'amour, mais un véritable tourment physique." [2]. He also recognised Le Roy's stylistic debt to the realists --- although not, curiously, the naturalists --- in many of the blunt descriptions of Valérie as prey to her own physical needs ("/.../ la partie où se trouve révélée la nature de Valérie se rattache par sa franchise au roman réaliste").

In her short review which adds nothing to a critical appreciation of this work, Rachilde stressed the affinity between herself and the author. She, too, was a native of Périgord and confirmed that Le Roy's command of local speech was total. She had once received a letter from him written entirely in patois. She emphasised the autobiographical

1. La Revue hebdomadaire, September 1921, p.221.
2. Nouvelle Revue Française, July-December 1921, p.218.

character of the novel and claimed, without substantiation, that the author knew the real 'Mademoiselle de la Ralphie': "Comme les dates de son histoire, le pays habité par elle, qui est aussi le mien et celui de l'auteur, tout coïncide, je veux faire croire qu'il s'agit de la même femme." [1]. The young lady in question is one of the daughters of the local gentry with whom Le Roy was meant to have fallen in love and by whom he had been rejected.

As Gaston Guillaumie remarks in his study of Le Roy, Mademoiselle de la Ralphie is as close as the author ever comes to producing a roman à these. The sustaining principle is not difficult to detect: love is part of the natural law and any attempt to control it or confine it within concepts of social class courts disaster. "C'est un développement de cette vieille idée héritée de Rousseau, que l'amour est plus fort ou devrait être plus fort que les préjugés de caste, que la passion doit briser le cadre étroit des conventions sociales." [2]. The theme neatly complements Le Roy's conviction that social distinctions are artificial barriers invented and sustained by those eager to retain what they possess. To any experienced reader of Le Roy it comes as no surprise to discover that Valérie's pedigree is not as pure as she likes to believe. When the rupture with Damase finally comes she is confronted with certain information which he discovered while working as M.Boyssier's clerk: "Sais-tu [...] que ce Jean du Jarry qui commença ta famille, il y a trois cents ans, était un fils de paysans, un serviteur [...] , un ancien valet comme moi, tiré

1. Mercure de France, 15 September 1921, p.743.

2. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.67.

du commun par la faveur de son maître!" [1]. In Le Roy's world, preoccupation with caste is pointless as class itself is pure convention founded in most cases on ignorance of the real origins of titles. Ironically, they are a logical product of the natural law itself when in centuries past the strongest conquered and settled down to consolidate their gains.

From this supposition, then, proceed the psychological studies of those who try to pervert the natural order of things. The most important of these studies --- that of Valérie in her battle to divorce social standing from natural emotion --- provides the badly needed centre around which much of this highly episodic novel revolves. It is not possible, however, to view Valérie as an all-exclusive nucleus, as Pauline Newman does, for that is to discount one important study at least --- that of Mme Boyssier --- which has nothing to do with Mademoiselle de la Ralphie. [2].

The mood of this novel is much more sinister than any of the earlier ones. The idyllic interludes identified in all the previous works are absent here, denying even that relief from the general gloom. This may be explained to a great extent by the author's increased dependency upon a naturalistic concept of determinism. Lacretelle is undoubtedly right in maintaining that it is precisely this pervading fatalism which saves the novel, with all its emphasis on love, from excessive sentimentality. Its effect is much greater than this, however, and

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, Paris 1921, p.175. Le Roy set out to expose the fatuity of the whole concept of noblesse in his monograph, Recherches sur l'origine et la valeur des particules des noms dans l'ancien comté de Montignac, en Périgord, Bordeaux 1889.

2. See Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène le Roy et son temps, p.114. "La dégradation progressive de Valérie est le fil conducteur du roman, autour duquel se nouent toujours les péripéties."

works against the credibility of character and plot, inflating both at times into the expressionistic visions of despair one encounters in Zola's Germinal or L'Assommoir. While in itself a perfectly respectable literary procedure, it does dissolve most of the links with the working class forged in such novels as Le Moulin du Frau, Jacquou le croquant or Nicette et Milou. The proletarian theme surfaces only at a tangent to the main action, chiefly through Damase --- although even he makes his way up the social ladder --- and the incidental appearances of Valérie's maidservants La Matille and Géraude, and the rebarbative Jules Tessonnier, the infatuation with whom marks the nadir of Valérie's decline.

Le Roy temporarily abandoned the proletarian basis on which his previous works were constructed, both when he attempted his study of provincial moeurs in Les Gens d'Auberoque and again here where he is less interested in sociological or historical forces than in pseudo-psychological and philosophical ones.

It is with Valérie's descent into squalid lunacy that this novel is chiefly concerned, and the finesse of some of the description of her various mental states suggests what talent Le Roy had for the roman psychologique in vogue at the end of the nineteenth century. With his central character, however, his sense of proportion failed him, with the result that often certain descriptions which the reader ought to find moving seem merely comically absurd.

To develop the confrontation between class pride and natural emotions it was necessary first to establish the character of Valérie while she was still a very young girl. Even before leaving Guersac for the convent school at Fontagnac she is seen as the epitome of the ancien régime noble, intensely

proud of anything which distinguishes her from the lower orders. She enjoys being obeyed by everyone and even at this stage is proud of the devotion shown her by the young servant Damase. Later, when at the convent, the gossip about Damase and Mme Boyssier reaches her, something more than pride is offended and the two forces at work within her are exposed. Although not yet willing to admit it, her noble sang-froid is being challenged by the irrational power of desire:

> [...] Au fond de son être, il y avait autre chose que l'orgueil, lorsqu'elle songeait à ce culte que lui avait voué le jeune homme; mais le préjugé nobiliaire l'empêchait de se l'avouer [...] Déjà, chez cette jeune fille, les mouvements du coeur étaient étouffés par les préjugés de caste que devait vaincre seulement l'emportement des sens. 1.

When eventually she gives herself to Damase the capitulation does not represent total victory on one side of her nature over the other. The duality survives and begins visibly to affect her actions. She becomes "[...] capricieuse et fantasque. Il lui passait dans la tête des bouffées de colère en se sentant enfermée dans un dilemme dont les deux termes lui étaient également inacceptables: céder à Damase [ie. marry him] ou renoncer à lui." 2. After the deaths of Damase and her infant son, the degeneration of Valérie's emotional stability is rapid. Throughout her developing passion first for the priest and then for her servant Tessonnier she remains lucid, aware of what is happening to her. This adds poignancy to the sense of tragedy surrounding this woman whose punishment is in excess of her 'crime'. Every step of the retribution is witnessed not only by the reader but by the victim herself. Within the space of thirty pages, roughly

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, Paris 1921, p.65.

2. Ibid., p.198.

ten years in Valérie's life, Le Roy takes her from a beautiful, proud and lusty woman to the emaciated skeleton in the asylum cell, running naked on all fours, convinced she is a she-wolf. Despite her paranoic snobbery [1.] she is not seen as an entirely unsympathetic character in her vain attempts to prevent carnal desire consuming her. She isolates herself in an old château left her by a deceased aunt and gets rid of her horse so she will not be tempted to go to the priest. Le Roy mars what otherwise is a credible episode by indulging a sense of melodrama witnessed elsewhere in his novels. Valérie develops a hatred for everything masculine and has all the male animals on the estate destroyed. Before she is finally committed to the asylum she suffers hallucinations, shooting from the windows at imaginary intruders. Her final condition in the cell, too, appears unnecessarily gruesome.

Although not the central one, the psychological study of Mme Boyssier is certainly much more convincing. The way is carefully prepared for her impending liaison with Damase in terms which set out yet another aspect of the author's conception of the natural law. He takes it as given that physical love forms part of it because it is essential for propagation of the species. Whatever frustrates this plan is wrong and

1. In protecting her child from any contamination by the lower classes Valérie shows how pernicious her sensibilities have become. Commoners are merely allowed to kiss the child's hand: "Il aurait répugné souverainement à Mlle de la Ralphie de /voir le bébé/ l'objet des caresses familières des étrangers, de ses serviteurs, de ses métayers, et, surtout, de poser ses lèvres aristocratiques là où s'étaient posées celles du vulgaire. Elle tolérait les gros baisers de la Provençale, qui mangeait les joues de son nourisson, mais non sans peine, et, pour elle, n'embrassait le petit qu'au front, pour éviter cette promiscuité de caresses." (p.194).

eventually leads to calamity. In the case of Mme Boyssier the impediment is not a sense of class, but her own marriage. She is presented as a woman in her forties, without children, married to a man twenty years her senior. The union itself had been arranged by the families and had from the beginning been loveless:

> Lorsque entra Damase dans sa maison, elle avait la quarantaine, et son mariage, resté stérile, était, depuis de longues années, devenu purement nominal, par suite de l'indifférence blasée de M.Boyssier, qui, disait-on lorsqu'il était clerc à Bordeaux, avait usé sa jeunesse en excès et mangé son blé en herbe. Mais voici qu'à cette heure le coeur de la pauvre femme s'éveillait à l'amour qu'elle avait ignoré. 1.

The attraction to Damase is considered just as natural as Valérie's and the internal struggle --- that between her senses and her fidelity to her marriage and Church --- is much more plausible than the exaggerated class consciousness of the younger woman. When Damase enters her husband's service she begins by being solicitous for his general welfare, making sure that he dresses properly and encouraging the young man's education. Gradually a platonic love develops which quickly turns to carnal passion which she struggles against admitting to herself. Like Valérie, however, she is aware of her degradation, and the scene in which she is reduced to spying on Damase bathing in the river invites considerable sympathy. Previously a chaste and devoted wife, she begins to contemplate murdering her husband and running away with the young man. Religious convictions provide a brake --- however fragile --- to such thoughts and those of suicide which she also considers: "Elle eût commis un sacrilège pour posséder Damase, parce que, quoique sincère, elle entrevoyait peut-être inconsciemment

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, p.59.

l'absolution future, mais la damnation certaine sans le bonheur préalable le faisait reculer." [1].

A third, although much less important, interior struggle is presented with considerable effect. Free of the histrionics which mar the characterisation of Valérie, the portrait of the priest Sagnol in conflict with his vocation is a convincing one. For a while he is able to resist the repeated advances of the young woman. If his robust masculinity is what attracts Valérie ("Cette exubérance pileuse, symbole de la force mâle, captivait les regards de Valérie"), it is precisely this which, in Le Roy's terms of reference, implies that he is wasting his time as a priest. Celibacy is as much a trap as Valérie's sense of class or Mme Boyssier's marriage, and he should discard it to fulfil his 'natural' role as lover and father.

The Church plays a larger part in this novel than anywhere else in Le Roy's work. As might be expected, the author's anti-clericalism colours most of his treatment of the institution, although there are some significant exceptions. Sagnol is one of them. Although in the end he succumbs to the flesh, it is only after struggling against a force of nature which, according to the thesis in this novel, is insuperable. Father Toussaint, Mme Boyssier's confessor, is also a sympathetic character in the mould of M.Bonal in Jacquou le croquant. As was true of Bonal, however, he fulfils the role less of a priest than that of humanitarian mentor. When the liaison with Damase is revealed to him, his counsel bears no trace of the Church's insistence on marital fidelity: "Je comprends que ta vie n'a pas été telle qu'une femme est en droit de l'espérer. Il est souvent ainsi dans une société où les questions d'argent et de position priment

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, p.75.

les indications de la nature, du bon sens et les inclinations de la jeunesse." [1] Rousseau speaks again in this novel through a most unlikely mouthpiece.

The apparent truce with anticlericalism does not last, however, and the antagonism reemerges with the figure of the hypocritical Father Turnac, the local curé, who is capable of anything to consolidate the authority of the Church or advance his own career. After one confrontation with him, the Jacobin Latheulade is prompted to remark to Damase, "Vois-tu, mon garçon, tant qu'il y aura un prêtre, l'humanité ne sera pas libre!" [2]

The most effective episode in this highly dramatic novel concerns the final confrontation between these two characters. It is an uneven match, as Latheulade is on his deathbed having been paralysed by a stroke. The priest sets himself the goal of making the old man repent his apostasy and receive the viaticum. As long as he remains alert Latheulade, predictably, refuses. As he begins to lose consciousness, however, the priest anoints him and, having told the townspeople present that Latheulade has made his last confession, places the Host in the open mouth gasping for breath. The power of this scene is due both to the sinister premeditation by the priest --- he had arranged to have Damase, the only one who could protect his friend, sent away on an errand --- and to the ghoulish hypocrisy of a cleric prepared to dupe the dying in this way. The episode also serves as a salutary reminder of Le Roy's talent for the dramatic whenever he kept under control his tendency toward the melodramatic.

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, p.81.
2. Ibid., p.91.

The role of Nature itself has undergone a subtle change in this work. Gone is the bucolic idyll so frequent in Le Moulin du Frau and Jacquou le croquant, to be replaced by stern warnings, in the examples of Valérie, Mme Boyssier and Sagnol, of the consequences whenever Nature is frustrated. The gentle coercion in the convention whereby Nature both reflects and influences human behaviour also disappears. This romantic device is replaced by the determinism in favour with the naturalists. Characters are what they are because their environment has allowed no option. Le Roy tries to make credible the uncompromising character of Valérie's will in its contest with the senses by establishing from the outset the unyielding aspect of the environment where she was raised. Countryside and château seem to combine to impose their own rigid norms:

> Les toitures de Guersac sont faites de ces pierres plates, appelées dans le pays „tuiles„, qui donnent une physionomie si originale aux constructions du pays sarladais. C'est comme un mur de pierres sèches qui monte obliquement le long des charpentes de châtaignier franc /.../ Ça et là, les pierres soulevées abritent de petites ouvertures triangulaires appelées „chatonnières„, qui éclairent les greniers. Le chapeau des cheminées, peu élevées au-dessus des toits, est fait de légers piliers de pierres brutes qui soutiennent une grande pierre plate, à peu près carrée, telle qu'elle vient de la carrière. 1.

Critics like Edmond Jaloux, however, remain unconvincing when maintaining that such description adequately explains character. It may help but is not in itself adequate, and Le Roy is forced to invent Valérie's hypersensitive class consciousness in order sufficiently to provide for her extraordinary behaviour.

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, pp.7-8. The emphasis is mine.

The determinism in Mademoiselle de la Ralphie is by no means restricted to the external forces of milieu. Heredity explains much about Valérie. Her passionate nature is seen as a legacy from her forebears as the reader is reminded that she descends from an illegitimate daughter of Louis XV: "Il y avait en Valérie une fatalité native, un monstrueux développement des instincts charnels, fait d'atavisme dû au sang libidineux de Louis XV, son bisaïeul." [1] There is more than a passing similarity to Zola in the lines setting out Valérie's course after she has left Damase: "Après lui, il n'y avait que le commerce des sens, un pur libertinage. Et puis, qu'arriverait-il si, cédant à un de ces entraînements que l'ardeur héréditaire du sang qui coulait dans ses veines rendait possibles et même probables, elle tombait sur un vulgaire drole?" [2] Later, it is this same passionate blood which defeats all her efforts to deprive herself of the abbé Sagnol: "Le souvenir du vicaire s'affaiblissait progressivement dans son esprit. Elle fut heureuse de ce résultat et crut avoir vaincu définitivement, mais ses ardeurs héréditaires de sang ne tardaient pas à la tourmenter et à réveiller en elle des passions un instant apaisés." [3] Le Roy's borrowing of the bête humaine image is also blatant and used with the same lack of subtlety with which Zola had employed it in La Terre. Whenever Valérie allows her imagination to turn to the priest, [...] une secrète émotion physique l'agitait; sa respiration

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, p.299.
2. Ibid., p.197. The emphasis is mine.
3. Ibid., p.265.

accélérée soulevait son sein; ses narines se gonflaient: la bête se réveillait en elle." [1]. Lying in bed half awake she responds to the imperatives of her body, awakenings couched in suitably bestial metaphor: "Parfois une vache, menée au taureau banal [...] bramait furieusement, et ces appels répétés la réveillaient de sa torpeur." [2].

That the tone of this work is much more sombre than anything that preceded it is due to such reliance on naturalist procedure unrelieved by any of the romantic interludes the reader has come to expect in these novels. Indeed, wherever lengthy description replaces metaphor, the atmosphere is no longer bleak but sordid. In presenting Valérie's final state in the asylum cell, for example, Le Roy lingers over the squalor of her emaciated form:

> Dans un coin obscur, une créature était accroupie, les bras repliés sur ses genoux. Comme beaucoup de fous furieux, elle ne pouvait supporter aucun vêtement. Elle était là, nue, les yeux hagards, ses cheveux gris hérissés, retombant comme une crinière [...] Ses seins, pareils à deux outres vides, pendaient jusqu'à la ceinture, et, dans l'état d'épouvantable maigreur où elle était, le squelette, avec tous ses os, apparaissait flottant dans une peau trop large qui retombait en plis rugueux. Le corps, plein de hideuses callosités et de plaques squameuses portait des traces de souillures récentes. [3].

It seems clear from this novel, where Le Roy is treating much more generalised themes than elsewhere, that his vision of the human condition was becoming increasingly pessimistic. His final novel L'Ennemi de la mort, which once again takes up the particular subject of the peasantry, confirms this observation.

1. Mademoiselle de la Ralphie, p.226.
2. Ibid., p.250.
3. Ibid., p.296.

Le Roy's final novel was first published in 1912 by Calmann-Lévy.[1] Written between 1900 and 1907 it is the least satisfactory of all Le Roy's work, indulging a growing pessimism about human nature, a preference to shock by the naturalism of his description, and an increased need to preach his social message.

The third person narrative begins in 1817 with the return of Daniel Charbonnière, upon his father's death, to the family estate in Périgord. He has been away in Montpellier studying to become a physician like the elder Charbonnière. The family are Huguenots and, although landowners, are closely linked to the peasantry from whose ranks Daniel's grandfather had emerged, having made some money "dans le négoce des bois." [2] Daniel is immediately struck by the unwholesome nature of the swampy countryside and the number of peasants who die from fever. He sets out on a crusade to have the region drained and better roads constructed, and to improve the general standard of public health. He is immediately challenged by the local landowners who object that "Les étangs donnent un bon revenu qui vient tout seul." [3] Paradoxically, it is the peasants themselves who demonstrate the greatest resistance to his proposals for improving their living conditions. [4] He has a brief love affair

1. It is from this edition that all references to the text are taken. Subsequent editions were published by J.Flory (Paris, 1936) and Editions Rencontre (Lausanne, 1959).

2. L'Ennemi de la mort, Paris 1912, p.3.

3. Ibid., p.61.

4. Compare the article by Maurice Talmeyr written after a visit to this particular part of Périgord in 1894: "La Double était effectivement dangereuse il y a trente ans, mais ne l'est plus depuis les routes que l'Empire y a fait percer /.../ Elles constituent un véritable drainage aérien, assainissent le pays par tout un réseau de courants d'air, et la forêt /.../ n'est déjà plus insalubre que

with Minna, a daughter of the wealthy M. de Légé, but breaks with her because, frivolous, snobbish and devoutly Catholic, she represents the antithesis of his own humanitarian and atheistic convictions. He then is confronted by the young peasant girl Sylvia who is in love with him and who shows considerable ingenuity in arranging 'chance' encounters. She ends up living with him, becoming pregnant and only after the child has been born do the couple marry. [1.] To begin a lengthy series of persecutions directed against Daniel, he is imprisoned for six months for having wounded a certain M.de Bretout in a duel provoked by the nobleman himself. Once the husband is away, Bretout has Sylvia ambushed in a forest and attempts to rape her. She, however, is armed with a knife and stabs him. Daniel returns from prison to find his property seized for repayment of debts, and he and his family take refuge in a small hut. The climax of the campaign against him occurs when a mob of peasants, incited by the local gentry and clergy, whip themselves into a frenzy against the Huguenots, raze Daniel's estate and murder his servant La Grande. The physician attempts to support his family by what he can grow on a small plot of land, but loses them one by one to disease or misadventure. He ends his days in the most abject poverty, one morning digging his own grave and barricading himself in the cabin to die.

> dans les fonds, là où fermentent des marécages /.../ Mais ce qu'il y reste encore de fièvres n'y est entretenu que par l'incurie des propriétaires et la stupidité des habitants." ("Dans la Double", La Revue hebdomadaire, April 1895, pp.414-415.)

1. It seems probable that both these liaisons had their counterparts in Le Roy's own experience. When he was thirty he courted the daughter of a good bourgeois family in Segonzac, but his political and religious views quickly prompted the family to close their doors to him. The model for Sylvia appears to have been Maria Peyronnet whom Le Roy married in a civil ceremony in 1877, three years after the birth of their first child.

Emile Guillaumin had abandoned his projected final novel, Les Mailles du réseau, after having read L'Ennemi de la mort, judging the subject matter too similar. The work had much less effect on contemporary critics who had gradually lost interest in Le Roy after his initial success with Jacquou le croquant. Rachilde alone rallied to support the author, although in a short review, and one of remarkable superficiality. She appeared to overlook the novel's pessimism and the simplistic representation of good and evil, finding the whole satisfactorily balanced. It exhibited "[...] un réalisme de bon aloi ne poussant pas aux exagérations pessimistes, mais n'épargnant pas non plus aux amateurs de vérités dites consolantes la fatalité de certaines conclusions." [1.]

Gaston Guillaumie calls this work "une lugubre tragédie [...] en quelque sorte le testament moral de Le Roy, l'aspect définitif de sa pensée sur le problème social." [2.] Although heavily critical of the author's reliance on melodrama to achieve effect, he isolates three essential elements in the characterisation of Daniel and suggest they summarise Le Roy's final attitude when contemplating the social problems of his day. First, and most important, is the stoicism with which the physician endures physical hardship, disease and persecution. Secondly, there is pity in the manner of Charles-Louis Philippe for the plight of the poor and ignorant. Finally, he discerns a heroic altruism which motivates Daniel always to act in the interest of others, while remaining faithful to his own "idéal puissant."

1. Mercure de France, 16 May 1912, p.363.

2. Gaston Guillaumie, Eugène Le Roy, romancier périgordin, p.68.

Marc Ballot, in his Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, confirms Pauline Newman's claim that Le Roy had little specialised knowledge of the Double region of Périgord, where the novel's action takes place, before setting out on a fact finding tour there in 1899. It was in the criminal reports for the area that he discovered details of a woman who had been burned alive by a mob of peasants and from this that he constructed the grisly fate of Daniel's servant. [1.] Newman also makes reference to Charles Aublant who studied the sources for this novel and claimed that the prototype for the hero physician was a certain doctor Pierre Delord who was born on 8 May 1785 in the Double region.[2.] On the author's characterisation of the hero she is more precise than Guillaumie, claiming that it is Daniel's altruism that Le Roy wished to emphasise: "Fidèle à son idéal en dehors de toute religion, il fait le bien au nom du bien, sans l'espoir de récompense." [3.] Robert Kanters, who wrote the preface to a 1959 edition of the novel, places Le Roy with Emile Guillaumin as "/les/ deux écrivains /qui/ dominent de très haut la littérature de la vie à la campagne de cette époque." [4.] He sees in Daniel both a hero worthy of the Enlightenment in his battle against tradition

1. An account of this journey appeared in L'Avenir de la Dordogne (Périgueux, April 1900) under the title "Carnets de route d'une excursion de quinze jours en Périgord." See Marc Ballot, Eugène Le Roy, écrivain rustique, Paris 1949, p.63.

2. Aublant's article was entitled "A Propos des sources de L'Ennemi de la mort", Bulletin de la Société historique et archéologique du Périgord, Vol.LXV, Périgueux 1938, pp.433-442. See Pauline Newman, Un Romancier périgordin: Eugène Le Roy et son temps, p.160.

3. Ibid., p.161.

4. L'Ennemi de la mort, Editions Rencontre, Lausanne 1959, p.8.

and all forms of obscurantism, and a worthy companion of the doctor Bernard Rieux in Camus' La Peste.

If, as Guillaumie suggests, this novel is Le Roy's moral testament at the end of his career as a writer, then it is indeed a pessimistic one. The reader is left asking the question 'à quoi bon?' --- a question which never formulates in the mind of Daniel himself --- when contemplating both the doctor's acts of charity and the peasant's hostile rejection of them. Although this novel bears many of the thematic hall-marks of the earlier ones, never before have the forces hostile to Le Roy's conception of social justice and enlightenment been seen as invincible.

The manner in which Nature is presented has always been significant, but not until L'Ennemi de la mort has it waged an active battle against the characters. Even in Mademoiselle de la Ralphie the "pays de pierres" had only power to condition human responses. In this final novel, Nature itself becomes a character whose chief purpose is to poison and kill the inhabitants. "Cette région de la Double," remarks Kanter, "on ne sait s'il faut dire que c'est le théâtre de l'action ou bien si c'en est un personnage." [1] In one of the early descriptions of the region the melancholic and unwholesome combine successfully to establish the sinister atmosphere that pervades this work:

> Ça et là, entre les frondaisons des massifs boisés ou les landes grises, apparaissaient les eaux plombées de quelques-uns des trois cents étangs qui empoisonnaient la Double /.../ De tous ces étangs épars aux queues interminables où pourrissaient dans la fange les végétaux champêtres et aquatiques, ainsi que des jonchaies et des marais aux boues infectes,

1. Preface to L'Ennemi de la mort, Lausanne 1959, p.15.

> s'élevaient des vapeurs pestilentielles qui s'épandaient sur le pays sauvage et solitaire. [1].

By conspiring against the very existence of the peasants, Nature warps their minds as well as poisons their bodies. The pendulum has completed its swing from the portrait of the sun kissed workers of Le Moulin du Frau in harmony with the elements, to the extremely unflattering picture of the peasantry presented here. The mayor of the small town of Saint-André tries to warn the idealistic Daniel that the labourers are not worth his efforts. Far from possessing any communal spirit of entr'aide, they cheat each other at every opportunity and on the slightest pretext drag their neighbours before the magistrate. "Son chien devenu vieux", the mayor continues, "/le paysan/ l'assomme à coups de pioche pour épargner une charge de poudre." [2]. Their ignorance was such that it was not uncommon to see a man working the fields with his pregnant wife harnessed beside a donkey pulling the plough.

Most distressing for the progressive Daniel are the people's innate resistance to change and superstitious nature. At every turn he is confronted by the barrier of habit. Doors are slammed in his face when he tries to persuade peasants to have their children vaccinated against smallpox: "C'était comme pour la destruction des étangs: presque personne ne se rendait à ses raisons." [3]. One of the greatest forces working against Daniel are the remnants of mediaeval superstitions which claim the peasants' loyalties. The particular figure of the sorcier has been met before, notably the one in Le Moulin du Frau who cured Gustou. Whereas in the earlier works such

1. L'Ennemi de la mort, Paris 1912, p.23. The emphasis is mine.
2. Ibid., p.81.
3. Ibid., p.166.

figures were picturesque cameos of rural types, the sorcerer Gondet in L'Ennemi de la mort is invested with a sense of evil in his ability to turn the people's minds against what really represents their best interests. He is the self-styled "médecin des fièvres" who has usurped the place of the country doctor, a position which was in any case --- as we have seen in novels as disparate in character as Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant and Le Père Perdrix, Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple, and Le Roy's own Nicette et Milou --- generally mistrusted. [1] Daniel's own attitude to the man who on more than one occasion had denounced him to the local notables is typical of his general approach to the rural labourers. He is not blind to their glaring faults, but is always prepared to search beyond the effect for the cause:

> [...] Il pensait à cette mauvaise nature d'homme qu'était Gondet: fourbe, traître, ingrat, larron, méchant, dépourvu de tout bon sentiment. Il était mal né, sans doute, mais combien l'ignorance, la misère, l'absence de toute éducation morale avaient développé ses défauts et ses vices! Et Daniel se disait: „Que de pensées fâcheuses, que de tentations déplorables assiègent le pauvre à qui tout manque, la nourriture du corps et celle de l'esprit. [2]

At no time during the long succession of rejections and persecutions he suffers at the hands of the peasants can

1. "The peasants [...] had their own views about diseases. They preferred annual purges to vaccinations; they had a firm belief in the hereditary nature of illnesses and thought they could not catch (they would not have used that word in the pre-microbe age) diseases their parents had not had; and they long persisted in calling in the doctor as a last resort --- often too late --- when all else failed." (See Theodore Zeldin, France 1848-1945, Vol.I, Oxford Clarendon Press, 1973, pp.26-27.)

2. L'Ennemi de la mort, p.283.

Daniel bring himself to blame them for their actions. He does not, it seems, even feel any irritation: "Les braves gens qui les critiquent ont-ils seulement pris garde au courage qu'il faut à ces paysans mal vêtus, mal logés, mal nourris, minés par la fièvre, pour suffire au rude travail de la terre?" [1]. Even their brutal assault on his estate and the burning of the maid-servant is attributed to incitement by the local gentry anxious to be rid of the reformer, and the priests eager to seize any opportunity to attack the Protestants. They are absolved of all moral responsibility for their actions solely by the quality of the life they lead: "Malheureusement les gens qui ahannent toute la vie pour un morceau de pain n'ont pas un instant de ce loisir qui permet de relever la tête et de se cultiver moralement." [2].

The determinism which had a firm hold on both Les Gens d'Auberoque and Mademoiselle de la Ralphie also plays a capital role here. The hereditary element is almost ignored, as Le Roy seems finally to come down on the side of environment as the chief cause of the peasants' misery:

> [...] Charbonnière avait beaucoup réfléchi et médité sur l'arrangement et la marche des choses humaines, et il en était venu à cette opinion que la perversité des individus provenait moins de leur nature propre que du milieu dans lequel ils avaient vécu [...] Le défaut de justice et d'équité dans les relations humaines et dans la répartition des avantages sociaux apparaissait à Daniel comme la cause génératrice du vice et du crime, bien plus que les dispositions perverses, innées, des individus. [3].

The above passage also indicates to what degree the tone of this work is overtly didactic. It follows that, if Le Roy

1. L'Ennemi de la mort, p.82.
2. Ibid., p.300.
3. Ibid., p.292.

shifted most of the blame for social problems onto environment, he could believe the situation alterable. Unlike any conception of blood determinism, the external milieu in which the workers lived could be changed to eliminate the injustices of the current system. Le Roy's republicanism has assumed a distinctly socialist tinge which often reduces the writing in this work to the level of pamphleteering. The causes célèbres vary from a curious plea to eliminate both Church and State control over marriage, to attacks against capital pubishment and, in particular, against the inequitable division of land: "Nul, voyez-vous," declares Daniel to a local bourgeois, "ne devrait posséder plus de terre qu'il n'en peut mettre en rapport directment, et tout homme a droit à la portion qui lui est nécessaire pour vivre, lui et les siens [...] La propriété du globe terrestre appartient à l'humanité." [1].

Paradoxically, the novel which most clearly makes the socialist assumption that human society is perfectible is also the least optimistic. Optimism is confined to Daniel himself and is not shared by the peasants nor, indeed, by the reader who has witnessed the death of the doctor's humanitarian ideals in the burning of the estate. It is not enough for the author to mention right at the end of the book that sixty years after the death of Daniel all his suggestions for the revitalisation of the Double were put into practice. Within the reference of the plot structure for this novel, Daniel and all he stands for has been defeated.

L'Ennemi de la mort represents Le Roy's only attempt to create a hero on the mythological scale, and it is the hero

1. L'Ennemi de la mort, p.301. Compare also pp.294-295; 352.

himself who is the major weakness in this work. He is the symbol of both morality and progress, although one entirely divorced from its surroundings. Although proud of his peasant origins, he is no longer a peasant, separated forever by a cultivation given him by formal learning. Persecuted by both nobility and workers, he is incapable of taking action in his own defence and dies the martyr's death of a saint laïc. He is a two dimensional character whose fate and his resignation to it seem preposterous. Le Roy has, by overburdening his hero with goodness, ruined both his credibility as a fictional character and his usefulness for didactic purposes in pointing the way for future progress in the countryside. Even the familiar rallying cries of the earlier novels, although still present, have lost their ability to stimulate the plot. The Rousseauesque exhortations ("Il ne faut pas médire de l'état de travailleur de terre: c'est le plus ancien, le plus nécessaire de tous..."), like the anticlericalism, form part of a detached character who, by wilfully remaining oblivious to the reality surrounding him, has lost all authority to speak.

Le Roy's growing tendency to dwell on the sordid reaches its culmination in L'Ennemi de la mort. Whether it is the minute description of smallpox pustules on a patient's body, the decomposition of an exhumed corpse or the gruesome death of the maidservant, the number of such digressions suggests a final pessimism on Le Roy's part that borders on the morbid. Certainly no other term can adequately describe the scene in which Daniel returns to his estate after the peasants' attack to find the smouldering remains of La Grande. He picks through them with a pole identifying "/un/ tronc informe et graisseux d'où sortaient des entrailles grillées, ces membres carbonisés

dont les extrémités avaient disparu, et surtout cette lamentable tête réduite à un moignon fuligineux." [1]. Emile Guillaumin's failure in the Bourbonnais to rally the peasantry in their own self interest resulted in his writing of Le Syndicat de Baugignoux in which the author vented his frustration at the workers' conservatism and suspicion. Although Guillaumin subsequently ceased to write novels, he did for decades after continue his efforts on the part of the peasantry through journalism. Le Roy, however, was at the end of his life and, because it was not his practise to keep a journal, one must turn to his novels to gauge the author's final mental disposition. It seems probable that, while the great republican's priorities were as clearly defined as ever, after a lifetime's acquaintance with them his confidence in the peasants and their ability to see the prevailing system changed was severely compromised. [2].

1. L'Ennemi de la mort, p.333. Compare the following description of Maria whom the peasants suspect Daniel of having poisoned and whose body the parish priest orders unearthed for examination: "Une horrible odeur cadavérique monta comme une bouffée au nez des assistants et les fit reculer. La figure suave de la belle Espagnole était méconnaissable: les yeux enfoncés n'étaient plus que deux trous hideux; les lèvres rongées laissaient voir deux rangées de petites dents blanches qui ressortaient au milieu des chairs noirâtres, décomposées." (p.296.)

2. Le Roy's former enthusiasm for capturing regional dialect in his style seemed also to wane here. Few of the linguistic experiments earlier employed were repeated, the narrator being content to remark that despite the standard French used in the dialogue, the characters were in fact speaking patois. See, for example, pp.34 and 357: "Le notaire parlait patois, suivant une coutume générale."; "---Grâce: ...grâce! criait-il en patois."

Marguerite Audoux: Biographical Summary.

Marguerite Audoux was born in Sancoins (Cher), a small town of 4,000 inhabitants, on 7 July 1863. Her father, who had been a foundling, was a carpenter and her mother a journalière who hired herself out to local bourgeois families. [1.] She died in October 1866 of tuberculosis, leaving behind the three-year-old Marguerite and a sister of six. The father started to drink heavily and eventually abandoned the girls, who were taken to the nuns at the "hôpital général" in Bourges. Marguerite remained there until she was thirteen when she was placed as a servant to a tailor in Neuvy-Baragon (Cher). Because the hours were long and she was treated harshly she ran away on 27 March 1877, making her way back to the hospital at Bourges. [2.] There she remained until 2 July 1877 when the Mother Superior found her a post as shepherdess on a farm in the Sologne. It appears that the authorities were quite aware of the hardship such a position would impose on the young girl, but she was being punished for fleeing her first employment

1. Lacking a family, the father had been given the name Don Quichotte by the authorities at the foundling hospital. Audoux was the mother's maiden name, which Marguerite sensibly adopted.

2. After the publication of the autobiographical Marie-Claire, Léon-Paul Fargue wrote to Valery Larbaud saying that he had, with the author, visited this hospital: "J'ai fait, sur ses indications, un plan précis et détaillé des bâtiments." From this he was able to place in their physical setting several of the episodes in the novel. See the letter of 8 December 1910 in Léon-Paul Fargue - Valery Larbaud, Correspondance: 1910-1946, Th. Alajouanine ed., Paris 1971, p.38.

with the tailor. [1] Her health was delicate and, unable to withstand the rigours of farm life, she fled back to Bourges for a year and half before, shortly after her eighteenth birthday, she left for Paris to take work as a sempstress.

During such leisure time as she had, being too poor to afford any other forms of amusement, she began to write about her experiences in the country. "Elle écrivait," observed Octave Mirbeau, "non avec l'espoir de publier ses oeuvres, mais pour ne point trop penser à sa misère, pour amuser sa solitude, et pour lui tenir compagnie, et aussi, je pense, parce qu'elle aimait écrire." [2] This was the pattern of her life for more than twenty years, when a chance encounter with Charles-Louis Philippe marked the beginning of her short, but spectacular, literary notoriety. A friend, Michel Yell, brought her one evening to his favourite haunt and that of several of his writer friends, "la crèmerie Brunat, rue Saint-Louis-en-l'Isle, où nous dînions pour trois sous." [3] There she first met Charles-Louis Philippe who eventually was shown the manuscript of what was to become her novel Marie-Claire. It was he who canvassed support among editors of his acquaintance for the work's publication. When it was finally

1. "La Supérieure, pour la punir de son escapade, la place dans une ferme en pleine Sologne, tout au nord du Cher, sur la limite du Loir-et-Cher." Louis Lanoizelée, Marguerite Audoux: Sa Vie, son oeuvre, Paris 1954, p.33. This monograph was the last in a series Lanoizelée wrote to commemorate his friends Emile Guillaumin, Charles-Louis Philippe, Lucien Jean and Marguerite Audoux.

2. See Mirbeau's preface to Marie-Claire, Fasquelle, Paris 1958, p.7.

3. Léon-Paul Fargue, Portraits de famille, p.42.

published in 1910 it was a great commercial success, bringing to Audoux the attendant publicity and considerable pressures to produce a sequel. It sold over 100,000 copies in its first year, and Arnold Bennett quoted the figure of 32,000 copies sold in its English translation ("England: 6,000; English Colonial: 6,000; America (about) 20,000"). [1.] Although she was already forty-seven years old, she refused to be hurried into a second book and did not, in fact, issue another until 1920. [2.] Marie-Claire was awarded the Prix Femina (Vie Heureuse) for 1910, and Octave Mirbeau was championing Audoux's claim also to the Prix Goncourt. [3.] She was even offered a nomination for the Legion of Honour which she, like Le Roy, declined, believing with him such bourgeois rewards to have little meaning for the working class writer.

After the brief burst of favour she found with the reading public her star quickly waned, and none of her succeeding works approached the quality or success of Marie-Claire. [4.] Her

1. Arnold Bennett, Letters, Vol.II, Oxford University Press 1970, p.283. James Hepburn, the editor of these letters, quotes the American publisher George Doran (1869-1956) who put the figure at 50,000 copies sold in America alone. See Letters, Vol.I, p.127n.

2. L'Atelier de Marie-Claire, Fasquelle. According to Francis Jourdain her refusal to write more was the result of a natural humility and a genuine disbelief in her literary capabilities. See his Sans Remords, ni rancune, Paris 1953, p.196.

3. See Fargue's letter to Larbaud (9 November 1910) three weeks before the Femina prize was announced: "Marguerite paraît un peu énervée par tout ce qu'on écrit à son sujet. Elle est en pleine bataille littéraire, et je comprends son ennui. Si vous pourriez rester à Paris, tâchez de la distraire des articles idiots qu'on lui consacre dans de basses feuilles de choux littéraires." Léon-Paul Fargue - Valery Larbaud, Correspondance: 1910-1946, p.33.

4. Apart from L'Atelier de Marie-Claire (1920), she also published De la Ville au moulin (1926), La Fiancée (1932) and Douce Lumière (1937).

eyesight, too, progressively faltered, the legacy of her years as a sempstress. As middle age passed into old age she became bitter about the public's treatment of her and tended more and more to the life of a recluse. In a letter to Valery Larbaud (27 January 1930), Marcel Ray gave indications of both the financial and mental disposition of the author: "Lucien Descaves m'a fait savoir qu'il avait réussi, avec l'aide de Duvernoy, à obtenir de la Société des Gens de Lettres, une rente de 6.000 f. pour Marguerite Audoux. C'est bien; mais ce qui est moins bien, c'est que Francis Jourdain me dit que Marguerite est devenue, depuis quelques mois, plus sombre, plus amère, plus susceptible et tourmentée d'hypocondrie que jamais, et qu'elle vit dans une réclusion volontaire et presque totale." [1] Marguerite Audoux died in 1937 and, despite what she herself might have believed, her death did not pass unmarked by officialdom. The then Minister of Education, Jean Zay, asked Fargue to choose a burial site for the ashes which were to be interred, at Audoux's request, at Saint-Raphaël. Fargue took it upon himself to select a tombstone and Audoux's remains were duly buried "under an oak tree, next to the tomb of Gallieni." [2]

1. "Valery Larbaud - Marcel Ray: Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 March 1979, pp.180-181.

2. André Beucler, Poet of Paris: Twenty Years with Léon-Paul Fargue, London 1955, p.187.

Marguerite Audoux: Preliminary Observations.

It seems almost certain that Marguerite Audoux's literary talent would have remained unrecognised had it not been for that chance meeting at the Crèmerie Brunat with Charles-Louis Philippe two and a half years before the latter's death in 1909. It was he who, having read the preliminary notes for the first chapter, encouraged her to complete the novel that was to become Marie-Claire. It is a credit to his own judgement that he could perceive a viable text in the unorganised sketches full of orthographic and grammatical errors. Three months before he died he had spoken to Emile Guillaumin about this ageing sempstress who was gradually losing her sight: "Je la connais depuis longtemps [...] Elle sait tout juste l'orthographe et se tire mal de la ponctuation, mais elle est, d'instinct, une merveilleuse artiste." [1] Valery Larbaud confirmed this impression of a 'primitive' writer ("[...] une femme à peu près dépourvue de culture et qui sait à peine l'orthographe") but saw this not as a liability, but rather a literary asset in the resulting fresh and blunt style: "[Elle a] une particulière finesse de l'imagination et de la sensibilité. Elle n'a rien à voir avec la culture livresque et savante." [2]

Certainly Philippe had no intention of distorting the originality of Audoux's style by trying to impose norms of his own. We have already seen to what extent he valued his "impression de classe" and the increasing attempts by various

1. Emile Guillaumin, "A Propos du Chaland de la reine", Les Primaires, August 1922, p.322.

2. Valery Larbaud, Ce Vice impuni, la lecture, Paris 1953, pp.314-315.

working class authors to write about their own experience. His influence on Marie-Claire was limited to encouraging Audoux on the one hand, and on the other to approaching Paul Cornu, editor of Cahiers nivernais, with a view to having published a completed draft of the first chapter. [1.] The rumours which spread in Parisian literary circles after the publication of Marie-Claire, that Philippe had in fact written the novel for his friend, appear to have originated with Philippe's mother and sister, a certain Mme Tournayre. They had mounted a campaign of insinuation against Audoux whom they suspected of being Philippe's mistress. In a letter to Larbaud (18 April 1910), Marcel Ray quoted an extract from a note written by the mother to Gide, which the latter had forwarded to Ray: "Mme A. me paraît avoir été la femme maudite dans la vie de mon pauvre enfant. Dans son article /in the 15 February 1910 number of the Nouvelle Revue Française devoted to Philippe/ elle ne parle que d'elle-même, et comme mon fils l'attendait le dimanche, elle parle aussi de „fille publique.„ Je sais bien que mon fils était très bon, mais il n'allait pas jusqu'à être l'esclave de cette couturière." [2.] It is true that a close bond developed between the two, but there is nothing in Philippe's letters or elsewhere to suggest any romantic liaison. Emile Guillaumin, who knew them both, confirmed that she had become something of a confidante to Philippe: "Il la tenait au courant de ses travaux. Il ne lui cachait rien de ses aventures sentimentales, ni de ses

1. After Philippe's death this was published under the title of "Le Chaland de la reine" in Cahiers nivernais, Nevers, June-July 1910.

2. "Valery Larbaud - Marcel Ray: Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 February 1979, p.188.

déboires. Lorsqu'il allait à la campagne, les dimanches d'été, avec quelques familiers il tenait à ce qu'elle fût de la partie." [1] No one who knew Philippe personally could corroborate the allegations about the authorship of Marie-Claire and, indeed, friends like Francis Jourdain brusquely dismissed them ("Que de fois j'ai entendu Philippe se refuser à donner le moindre conseil à Calotte" /Philippe's nickname for Audoux/). [2]

To understand fully why an entirely unknown name from the provinces could so rapidly capture the imagination of the capital, it is necessary to appreciate how extensive a network of influential friends Audoux inherited through her association with Philippe. Members of the "groupe de l'Île Saint-Louis", as they called themselves, into which she was introduced by Michel Yell included Francis Jourdain, Léon-Paul Fargue, the literature and drama critic Régis Gignoux, Marcel Ray, Léon Werth and the painter Charles Guérin. [3] It was at Jourdain's

1. Emile Guillaumin, "A Propos du Chaland de la reine", Les Primaires, August 1922, p.323.

2. Francis Jourdain, Sans Remords ni rancune, p.196. See also Octave Mirbeau's preface to Marie-Claire, Fasquelle, Paris 1958, p.10: "Charles-Louis Philippe l'encouragea particulièrement, mais jamais il ne lui donna de conseils." In an afterword by John Raphaël to his translation of the novel (Chapman & Hall, London 1911), he relates the following anecdote: "When the committee of the Vie Heureuse was voting on her book before awarding her the £200 prize for the best book of the year, somebody suggested the possibility that she had had help with it. Madame Severine was sent to fetch the manuscript. It was passed around, examined, and no more doubt was possible." (p.308.)

3. Apart from their gatherings at the Brunat establishment, the group also met regularly at Philippe's flat at 45, quai Bourbon. During the summer weekends of 1905-1906 they would also leave Paris for Carnetin, then a village in the Seine-et-Marne, where they rented a house.

home in Coutevroult early in 1910 that Audoux finished the final draft of Marie-Claire and he was the first to read it. Philippe having died in December 1909, it was Jourdain who took up the attempt to have the work published, and passed the manuscript to Octave Mirbeau from whose hands both the Grande Revue and, finally, Fasquelle received it.

Through Léon-Paul Fargue, Audoux was put in touch with three major figures of the contemporary literary scene: Valery Larbaud, Arnold Bennett and Alain-Fournier. It was Larbaud who copied Audoux's final manuscript before it was offered to Fasquelle. A letter to Larbaud from Marcel Ray (24 January 1910) makes it clear that it was at this stage that the errors of syntax and orthography were corrected: "C'est très chic de votre part aussi, vous savez, de copier le ms. de Marguerite Audoux et de lui épargner ainsi, délicatement, des maux d'yeux inutiles, une perte d'argent trop sensible pour elle, et un travail de correction et de disposition typographique qu'elle ne peut pas faire. Bravo:"[1].

No one tried harder to protect Marguerite Audoux's interests than Arnold Bennett. Apart from writing an introduction to the 1911 English translation (Marie-Claire, Chapman & Hall, London 1911), he was particularly active in attempting to guard the author's financial rights. Given Audoux's inexperience, she was a natural target for the unscrupulous and had been persuaded to sell the English and American rights to her book for about £20. In a letter dated 14 June 1911 he urged Larbaud to prompt Audoux to hire J.B. Pinker, Bennett's

1. "Valery Larbaud - Marcel Ray: Lettres", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 February 1979, p.170. In reply, Larbaud's letter stated unequivocally his affection for Audoux: "/Elle/ a pris un peu la place qu'occupait Philippe dans ma vie intérieure. Je l'aime beaucoup." (Ibid., p.176.)

own agent, as her representative in England and America to prevent her from being swindled on any subsequent novels she wrote. As far as Marie-Claire was concerned, Bennett remarked: "The various publishers have paid royalties of at least £1,300 on these sales. I know the people who have received these royalties and made the profits, but I am not at liberty to name them." [1] Having read Marie-Claire, Bennett was persuaded that she was a significant literary figure and was indignant at the prospect of her being duped in the future. Such was his faith in her potential that he was prepared to finance the next publication, sight unseen: "If any person has told Madame Audoux that the English and American rights to her next book are worth only £50, and that it is necessary for her to make a contract at once, that person is an unscrupulous liar /.../ To show you how strongly I think about the matter, I may tell you that I myself would be willing to pay Madame Audoux £200 on account of English and American royalties, on the day of publication of the translation (if she left the whole matter to me, and delivered the manuscript this year) and also to pay her every penny that I received in addition. Of course I should want no profit whatever." [2] Audoux appears to have acted on neither Bennett's advice nor his offer.

Alain-Fournier had also read Marie-Claire and been impressed both by the simplicity of expression and by its

1. Arnold Bennett, Letters, Vol.2, James Hepburn (ed.), Oxford University Press 1968, p.283. See also the editor's note to this letter which names the translator John Raphaël as the man who had received most of the money. A week later Bennett wrote to Pinker: "I have done all I can to prevent her from making a fool of herself." (Letter of 21 June 1911, Arnold Bennett, Letters, Vol.1, Oxford University Press 1966, p.158.)

2. See his letter to Larbaud. Arnold Bennett, Letters, Vol.2, pp.283-284.

evocation of the Cher countryside so familiar to him: "Voudra-t-on se rappeler," writes François Talva, "que dans /la/ simplicité des mots et de la phrase découverte en lisant Marie-Claire, Alain-Fournier trouva, de son propre aveu, le langage qu'il cherchait pour écrire Le Grand Meaulnes?" [1].

Her acquaintance with André Gide was much less intimate, Gide appearing to take interest in her career more out of deference to his friend Philippe, and simple curiosity, than from any confidence in her literary capabilities. Although little is to be gleaned from the writings of Gide himself, Hugues Lapaire relates the following account, allegedly told him by Audoux, of a visit Gide made to her in her tiny sempstress's flat. Lapaire makes little attempt to hide his dislike for Gide ("Le maharajah de la Nouvelle Revue Française a daigné gravir ses six étages!"), and the incident, while an interesting possibility, is probably apocryphal. Certainly the pluperfect subjunctives in the mouth of the humble woman do not enhance its credibility:

> Gide lui dit sur un ton assez désagréable:
> ---Vous avez de la chance pour que l'on
> vous fasse passer par le grand escalier!
> ---Vous eussiez préféré, monsieur, lui
> répondit-elle, que je prisse l'escalier
> de service? Je ne suis pas assez reluisante
> à vos yeux, sans doute, pour me permettre
> le même chemin que vous? Si cela vous offusque,
> tant pis! Tout fille du peuple que je suis,
> je prends le grand escalier! [2].

1. François Talva, "Sur deux lettres inédites de Romain Rolland à Marguerite Audoux", Europe, November-December 1965, p.170. For further discussion of the friendship between the two authors see Louis Lanoizelée, Marguerite Audoux: Sa Vie, son oeuvre, p.19. Romain Rolland himself first met Audoux in 1920. See two of his letters to her (4 April 1921 and 2 May 1926) in Europe, November-December 1965, pp.172-173. In the second of these he refers to her as "amie que j'ai peu vue (je vous ai connue trop tard: et quand je vous ai connue, j'étais dans des années de deuil et de maladie)."

2. Hugues Lapaire, Portraits berrichons, Paris 1927, p.225.

Like Gide, Emile Guillaumin first heard of Audoux through Philippe. Although the two men discussed her work as early as the Summer of 1908, Guillaumin did not meet her for another twenty years, in the Spring of 1928, at her flat in Paris. The second and final meeting also took place in Paris, in May 1936. [1].

1. See Emile Guillaumin, "Première et dernière visite à Marguerite Audoux", Les Nouvelles littéraires, 14 December 1937, p.8.

Marie-Claire.

The novel first appeared in serial publication in La Grande Revue between 10 May and 10 June 1910 and in one volume, published by Fasquelle, later the same year. [1]

This is a first person narrative closely modelled on the author's own life. It is divided into three main sections, the first concerning the life of a young girl, Marie-Claire, in an orphanage after she has been abandoned by her father. The second deals with her experience working on a métairie --- first as shepherdess, then as housemaid --- while the final section describes an abortive love affair, her return to the orphanage and eventual departure for Paris.

There is little evidence of a progressive plot, but rather one finds a series of tableaux effectively arranged to suggest the general direction of the girl's life rather than to define it.

Of the two main digressions, the most arresting one occurs in the first part where Marie-Claire is the uncomprehending witness of the growing infatuation of one of the nuns at the orphanage, Sister Marie-Aimée, with a young priest. The priest's death in Rome, followed by that of the nun from a broken heart ends the first section of the novel, removing with Marie-Aimée the one kindly support the girl had found.

The second part is devoted to the period the girl spends as a bergère on the farm of the peasant Sylvain and his wife

1. Subsequent editions were published by Fasquelle (Paris) 1911; Les Eclectiques du Livre (Paris) 1922; Fayard (Paris) 1925; La Guilde du Livre (Lausanne) 1937; Fayard (Paris) 1941; Fasquelle (Paris) 1942; Editions de la Toison d'Or (Paris) 1944; Editions du Panthéon (Paris) 1950; Le Club français du livre (Paris) 1950; Fasquelle (Paris) 1958; Didier (Paris) 1960.

Pauline. Despite considerable physical hardship, this direct contact with Nature is essentially an invigorating one. The interlude ends with the death of Sylvain and the eviction of his family from the land to make room for the landowner's son.

It is in the final part, in which Marie-Claire is kept on as a maid, that the second of the two main digressions is developed. The girl, now eighteen years old, falls in love with Henri, the young brother of her new employer, Mme Alphonsine. At first her sentiments are reciprocated, but the young man is soon ordered by his family to have nothing further to do with a servant, and the romance quickly dies. Marie-Claire flees back to the orphanage where she remains briefly before setting out for Paris to seek her fortune there.

"Un instinct démocratique, le plus bas des instincts, pousse en ce moment les gens de lettres et les journalistes à insister sur le côté populaire de la question littéraire. Or, ce serait bien mal connaître le peuple que de le supposer capable de rêver démocratiquement." In these terms did Wanda Landowska signal her opposition to what she saw as the vulgarisation of the novel, with the reading public increasingly demanding characters and plot of popular inspiration. [1.] She admired Audoux's novel to the extent that it did not pander to parochial themes or employ common or regional speech, and that it earned its place in the pantheon of French literature by treating universal themes. [2.] She appreciated also the

1. See her review of Marie-Claire in Mercure de France, 16 December 1910, p.682-683.

2. Compare the anonymous notice in Mercure de France, 1 December 1910, p.534: "Marie-Claire /.../ exprime la sensibilité profonde et neuve de Mme Marguerite Audoux: une grande femme de lettres qui est, en prose, un poète exceptionnel et venge son sexe des précieuses et des bas-bleus."

restraint with which so autobiographical a work was narrated ("L'auteur connaît son métier, elle s'arrête où commencerait la sensiblerie qui est l'erreur de la belle émotion..."), while sympathising with the author for the prurient interest taken by the press in her personal history: "Je ne connais pas du tout Mme Marguerite Audoux et je suis certaine que son orgueil d'artiste a dû cruellement saigner en parcourant les feuilles publiques où l'on traînait sa pure vie privée."

Jean Giraudoux, in a short but very favourable article written for La Grande Revue, praised that illusion of simplicity which requires firm stylistic control: "On remarquera [...] dans son roman, pour lequel elle a utilisé des souvenirs d'enfance mais qui n'est pas du tout une autobiographie, un souci instinctif de la composition [...] Nous avons, il n'y a point à en douter, affaire à un écrivain de rare talent." [1.]

For Alain-Fournier, Marie-Claire's greatest value lay in the unadorned yet never coarse evocation of the Sologne and its peasants: "Si grossiers qu'ils paraissent dans les circonstances ordinaires, ils apportent aux démarches importantes de la vie une gravité, une discrétion, une lenteur qui passent ordinairement pour de l'indifférence; et il faut une enfant bien sensible comme cette Marie-Claire pour s'apercevoir de leur bonté qui ne parle pas, pour surprendre le tremblement imperceptible de leur émotion profonde." [2.]

1. La Grande Revue, 10 May 1910, p.14.

2. Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 November 1910, p.616. Although he can draw a general parallel between Audoux and Philippe ("Devant les plus humbles détails de la vie campagnarde, elle est, à la façon de Charles-Louis Philippe, remplie d'une admiration d'enfant pauvre [...]"), he dismisses the possibility of any direct influence: "A peine trouverait-on ici, une image, là, un procédé, qui fassent penser à Charles-Louis Philippe ou à Jules Renard." (p.619.)

Not everyone shared the critical euphoria which greeted the publication of Marie-Claire. Of the dissenting opinions, that of François Le Grix is the most lucid. He was no admirer of the fashion for 'rustic literature' which, he maintained, tempted the writer to lie; either, like George Sand, he would idealise the subject in order to provide the city dweller with a breath of fresh air or, like Zola, he would deliberately disfigure it, "pour prouver au civilisé que, passé l'octroi, il redevient une brute." [1]. What displeased him in Marie-Claire was a stylised simplicity which, in order to be achieved, overcharged the narrative of a child with the rhetorical devices of an adult: "Marie-Claire ne songeait peut-être pas, dès le couvent, ou dès la ferme à écrire des romans; mais sûrement elle y prenait des notes." [2]. He criticised Audoux personally for allowing her work to be hailed as the spontaneous outpourings of an untutored prodigy: "On ne saurait reprocher à Mme Audoux de transposer, puisqu'il n'y a guère d'oeuvre d'art sans transposition. Mais qu'elle veuille bien laisser dire, alors, que son livre est très fait, avec un art souvent artificiel, et qu'il n'est pas ce prodige de réussite ingénue qu'on nous a vanté." [3]. Octave Mirbeau was also singled out for criticism as the perpetrator of this myth. He had, in fact, executed a carefully planned publicity campaign emphasising both the origins of the novelist and her failing eyesight, and the public curiosity this aroused helps explain the phenomenal sales figures for Marie-Claire. [4].

1. See his review of Gaston Roupnel's Nono in La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 April 1911, p.274.
2. La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 April 1911, p.267.
3. Ibid.
4. "Je voudrais comprendre d'abord pourquoi M.Mirbeau [...] fait un si grand cas de la „profession„ de Mme Audoux [...] Le livre d'une couturière ne saurait

Paul Claudel was impressed as little by Mirbeau's efforts as he was by the quality of Marie-Claire itself. In a letter from Prague (26 December 1910) he complained to Gide: "Je suis agacé du bruit que l'on fait autour du livre parfaitement insipide de Mademoiselle Audoux, tandis que notre cher Philippe n'a jamais pu parvenir de son vivant à la notoriété." [1] Although he did not mention it, Claudel could hardly have been pleased by Audoux's portrayal of the nuns at the orphanage, whose shortcomings ranged from Mother Superior's gratuitous cruelty to the thinly veiled lust of Sister Marie-Aimée. Certainly the religious sensibilities of Francis Jammes seem to have been offended by it, as Larbaud, who had just seen Jammes in Pau, mentioned to Fargue in a letter dated 6 April 1911: "Jammes est très simple, très franc. Sa religion est aussi très simple et très franche, et ce n'est certainement pas une pose. Malheureusement elle le rend insensible à la beauté de Marie-Claire et injuste à l'égard de Mirbeau." [2]

Those commentators who are critical of the novel and who do not specifically fault a laboured simplicity, tend to agree with Claudel that the work is merely "insipid". In his history of French literature Henri Clouard damns with faint praise: "La petite couturière, dans ce livre unique, atteignait d'un coup de tendre génie au but poursuivi par son parrain Charles-Louis Philippe avec application. Réussite trop personnelle

tirer sa principale vertu de ce qu'il est le livre d'une couturière." (La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 April 1911, p.265.) For further discussion of Mirbeau's campaign, see John Raphaël's notes to his translation of Marie-Claire, Chapman & Hall, London 1911, p.xiii.

1. Paul Claudel - André Gide, Correspondance: 1899-1926, Paris 1949, p.121.

2. Léon-Paul Fargue - Valery Larbaud, Correspondance: 1910-1946, p.66.

d'ailleurs, trop de simple et pure source, pour avoir pu exercer d'autre influence que celle de la beauté." [1.] Hugues Lapaire also detects a certain affinity with Philippe, but sees Audoux's work as less self-consciously 'literary': "Marie-Claire, c'est l'histoire d'une âme simple, soeur en cela de la Félicité de Gustave Flaubert /Un Coeur simple/, histoire noblement contée, à la façon de l'écrivain de Cérilly, Charles-Louis Philippe, avec ses notations justes et méticuleuses, sa fine ironie, ses attendrissements naïfs et très humains, mais avec moins de „littérature„ [2.]

If Christian Sénéchal refers to Audoux as "une sorte de réplique féminine de Guillaumin", he is also forced to admit that her significance is as much sociological as it is literary: "/...7 Les souvenirs d'enfance /dans/ Marie-Claire marquent une date dans notre littérature, tant par les origines de l'auteur que par les répercussions du livre." [3.] In this important respect the author of Marie-Claire is representative of all the novelists treated in this thesis. The relative commercial success of their various works must always be weighed against their attraction as novelties for the public. They were all indigent provincial upstarts trying to penetrate the literary establishment of the capital. The fact that Audoux was a woman --- and one rapidly losing her eyesight --- further fired the public's imagination. "Il fallait s'attendre," sourly remarked François Le Grix, "que cette littérature de

1. Henri Clouard, Histoire de la littérature française: 1855 à 1914, p.521.
2. Hugues Lapaire, Portraits berrichons, p.216. One obvious explanation for this ingenuousness, as Francis Jammes recognised, was the simple fact that Audoux had read very little: "Elle ne fut ni enseignée, ni renseignée par le livre, jamais tentée d'étudier une technique, de manier l'outil du professionnel dont elle n'enviait --- ni ne méprisait --- l'adresse." (Sans Remords ni rancune, p.196.)
3. Christian Sénéchal, Les Grands Courants de la littérature française contemporaine, Paris 1941, pp.77n. and 268.

l'ingénuité sévirait après Charles-Louis Philippe. Il a malheureusement fait école." [1].

The novel, about which so much enthusiasm was generated at the time, is unspectacular but a competent piece of literary craftmanship. From the beginning it is clear that Audoux is attempting to create a childlike --- rather than a retrospective and adult --- viewpoint for the narrator. In this she is often successful, especially in the first part concerning Marie-Claire's experiences at the orphanage. Care is given to the obvious points of perspective when dealing with a girl of five years. Entering any building, for example, the first consideration for the child are the physical obstacles to be overcome. On one occasion while she and her sister are being taken around the village to look for their father, "Le père Chicon nous mena [...] dans une belle maison, où il y avait un perron avec beaucoup de marches." [2]. The narrative is solidly based in descriptive detail of the type which would impress upon the mind of a child. Marie-Claire can decipher the increasingly stormy connection between Marie-Aimée and the priest both from the nun's physical appearance and her visible actions: "Depuis quelque temps, soeur Marie-Aimée devenait triste; elle ne jouait plus avec nous; souvent, elle oubliait l'heure de notre dîner. Madeleine m'envoyait la chercher à la chapelle, où je la trouvais, à genoux, le visage caché dans ses mains." [3]. The innocence of the narrative perspective permits an irony which

1. La Revue hebdomadaire, 8 April 1911, p.269.
2. Marie-Claire, Paris 1958, p.18.
3. Ibid., p.45.

possesses considerable charm in the subtlety with which Audoux develops it as the irregular relationship grows. On one occasion Marie-Claire overhears a conversation between the two and mistakenly believes them to be discussing the background of one of her friends, Colette:

> ---Oui, à quinze ans.
> Monsieur le curé dit:
> ---A quinze ans, on n'a pas la vocation.
> Je n'entendis pas ce que répondit soeur Marie-Aimée, mais M. le curé reprit:
> ---A quinze ans, on a toutes les vocations: il suffit d'un geste affectueux ou indifférent, pour vous éloigner ou vous encourager dans une voie [...]
> Ils restèrent longtemps sans parler; puis soeur Marie-Aimée leva le doigt comme pour une recommendation et dit:
> ---En tout lieu, malgré tout, et toujours.
> Monsieur le curé étendit un peu la main en riant, et il dit aussi:
> ---En tout lieu, malgré tout, et toujours [...] Pendant longtemps je me répétai les mots que j'avais entendus mais jamais je ne pus les associer à l'histoire de Colette. [1]

The perspective of the child narrator can also happily accommodate the sense of humour often lacking in proletarian novels. Seemingly trivial incidents to the eyes of an adult are magnified by the child's imagination into something extraordinary. At the orphanage the children undergo the weekly ritual of surrendering their soiled handkerchiefs in return for clean ones. Marie-Claire, a model inmate in many other respects, never manages to keep hers for seven consecutive days. The end of the week, therefore, holds special terrors for her, and Audoux relates both the confrontation between child and nun and the preceding panic with a gentle humour:

> J'y pensais seulement à ce moment-là; alors, je retournais toutes mes poches; je courais comme une folle dans les dortoirs, dans les couloirs, jusqu'au grenier; je cherchais partout. Mon Dieu! pourvu que je trouve un mouchoir! [2]

1. Marie-Claire, p.68.
2. Ibid., p.37.

It is a measure of the suppleness of Audoux's style that she is able to alternate between reality and imagery to suggest the workings of a child's mind as it passes easily from the visual world surrounding it to the fantasised world within. Sister Gabrielle, while preparing dinner, is described by Marie-Claire in these terms: "Les manches retroussées jusqu'aux épaules, elle plongeait et replongeait dans la salade ses deux bras noirs et noueux, qui sortaient de là tout luisants et gouttelants et qui me faisaient penser à des branches mortes, les jours de pluie." [1] Similarly, two of the maids towering over the girl and reproaching her for being selfish, "[...] criaient toutes deux à la fois en se tenant penchées sur moi. Je pensais à deux fées braillardes, une noire et une blanche." [2]

Occasionally, temporal reality appears to be left behind in favour of the kind of impressionism which attracted Alain-Fournier. Indeed, the following extract conveys precisely the same foggy timelessness of Augustin Meaulnes' initial discovery of the Château des Sablonnières. Marie-Claire, too, is lost in heavy mist, while tending her sheep. She comes across what she thinks is a church, but as she approaches and is able to get her bearings she finds two lanterns hung on tree branches by the family to guide her return: "Le haut des arbres se perdait complètement dans le brouillard, et les bruyères paraissaient toutes enveloppées de laine. Des formes blanches descendaient des arbres et glissaient sur les bruyères en longues traînées transparentes." [3]

1. Marie-Claire, p.19.

2. Ibid., p.36.

3. Ibid., p.111. Compare with this the stark and violent realism of the description of the annual pig slaughter, pp.136-138.

Although not as pronounced as it was in Le Roy's works, the Rousseauesque idealisation of Nature plays its role in Marie-Claire. After a year with Sylvain's household the girl has formed an unconscious bond with the land which even a short trip into the neighbouring villages brings to the surface. Having been taken there to celebrate her first anniversary with the family she experiences a sense of dépaysement: "Je sentais en moi comme une grande tristesse; et quand, à la nuit tombante, la voiture nous ramena à la ferme, j'éprouvai un vrai soulagement à me retrouver dans le silence et l'odeur des prés." [1.] At the beginning of the love affair with Henry, Marie-Claire's identification with Nature is established symbolically as she tries physically to emulate the attitude of the trees around her:

> Un gros pommier se penchait à côté de moi, et trempait le bout de ses branches dans la source [...] J'imaginais que j'étais un jeune arbre, que le vent pouvait déplacer à son gré. Le même souffle frais qui balançait les genêts passait sur ma tête et emmêlait mes cheveux; et pour imiter le pommier, je me baissais, et trempais mes doigts dans l'eau pure de la source. [2.]

It is significant that this link between girl and Nature is established at the outset of the liaison with Henry. The idyll of the affair is predicated upon a disregard for contemporary class barriers, allowing the couple a unity despite their social labels of 'servant' and 'master'. The harmony is destroyed by the family intervening to forbid the continuing affair. Improbably, Henry acquiesces without the slightest opposition --- surely a major flaw in the composition of this work --- and the girl is forced back to the orphans' hospice:

1. Marie-Claire, p.126.

2. Ibid., p.172.

"[...] Et quand je compris que je restais seule sur le chemin, je ne vis plus qu'une masse d'un blanc gris, qui paraissait glisser sans bruit sur la neige du sentier." [1.]

Like Guillaumin and Le Roy, Audoux is capable of venting blatantly anti-bourgeois sentiments. Although this is done rarely, the eviction scene in which a local handyman, Jean Le Rouge, is expelled from his métairie recalls similar incidents in La Vie d'un simple and Jacquou le croquant. M.Tirande, the proprietor, is a "petit homme sec" and his daughter-in-law is quite unmoved by Marie-Claire's pleas on behalf of Le Rouge. She appears not even to listen to the girl's emotional appeal and, without raising her eyes from her knitting, replies: "--- Je crois que je me suis trompée d'une maille [...] C'est ennuyeux, il faut que je défasse tout un rang." [2.] Unlike her predecessors, however, Audoux makes no attempt to exploit the picturesque potential in the novel's setting or the situation of the central character. Audoux restricts herself to what is necessary to sketch a realistic framework for the action, shunning the folklore of regional stories, songs, religious customs and the other 'rustic' devices we have encountered elsewhere. The actual physical detail of the Sologne gleaned from a reading of this work is minimal when compared with Le Roy's travelogue of the Dordogne. Although the simplicity of her style requires a simplicity of vocabulary , there is no concession whatever to accommodate peasant dialect in any of the three parts of this novel. This is not surprising in a writer who had difficulty enough with standard French without attempting any of the elaborate linguistic experiments of a novelist like Le Roy.

1. Marie-Claire, p.186.
2. Ibid., p.155.

Considering the subject matter, the general tone of Marie-Claire is not harsh, nor is there any of the pessimism which creeps into many of the other novels examined in this thesis. Even in the drab existence at the orphanage the girl is sustained by the friendship of compassionate sisters like Marie-Aimée and Désirée-des-Anges. In the second part she experiences a wholesome life on the land which makes natural the various regrets she has about the final departure for Paris. Even here, however, there is more than a glimmer of hope as, the memory of Henry gradually fading, she begins to look forward to life in the city. In the final scene at the station her ticket is bought for her by a young railway employee whose innocent attentions amuse the girl and whose looks merit a second glance: "Il avait, comme Henri Deslois, des yeux pleins de douceur, et un air grave." [1].

1. Marie-Claire, p.214.

Lucien Jean: Biographical Summary.

Lucien Jean (pseudonym for Lucien Dieudonné) was born in Paris on 20 May 1870, the son of Alsatian peasants who had emigrated to the capital. He attended the école communale and then the Collège Turgot where the emphasis was more on mathematical than literary studies. There he learned the rudiments of industrial design until, at the age of sixteen, his father's death forced him to abandon education in order to support his mother and sister. He took the post of a minor clerk at the Hôtel de Ville, a position he held until his premature death in 1908.

He married when he was twenty-one and produced a son, Jean, and daughter, Lucienne. The meagre wage at the Hôtel de Ville was not sufficient to maintain the household, and Lucien Jean spent most of his free hours at home with extra paperwork in order to supplement his income. He led an entirely unspectacular existence, devoting himself to his family, his work and, when time permitted, to writing short stories and some verse. In 1895 he began to frequent the literary reunions organised by the review La Plume and also started to cultivate a theoretical interest in anarchism. In 1901 he founded, using his own limited resources, a monthly literary and political magazine called Aujourd'hui. It survived for only four months and collapsed, having failed to secure an adequate readership. He followed with great interest the efforts of the C.G.T. to co-ordinate the various unions beginning to proliferate among the capital's workers, and in 1904 he was one of the founders of the Syndicat des Employés Municipaux.

Of delicate constitution, he suffered ill health all his life. During childhood he had undergone several operations for

coxalgia which left him lame, one leg two inches shorter than the other. It was from pulmonary weakness that he most suffered, enduring repeated attacks of asthma, bronchitis and pneumonia, and it was the latter which sent him to an early grave at the age of thirty-five.

Preliminary Observations:

The greatest problem in researching the background of this worker-writer is the almost total lack of primary material. This is chiefly due to his wife who exhibited increasing resentment against the memory of her late husband. During the final years of the marriage he devoted ever greater amounts of his time to his syndicalist activities and his writing, to the detriment --- in his wife's view --- of his family life. The same woman, "[...] qui avait été la fidèle compagne [de ses] moments de lutte sociale et littéraire," [1] kept nothing to remind her of their married life after Jean had died. She destroyed all letters and manuscripts in her possession and refused to collaborate in later efforts to have her husband's work collected and published. The son, Jean Dieudonné, kept with him mementos of his father's literary activity, but all was lost when the merchant navy vessel on which he served in the 1914-1918 War was torpedoed. After the death of Mme Jean, the son recalled her hostility towards the memory of her late husband. Apart from undermining their family life, she also considered Lucien's ever increasing appetite for work to have been the cause of his early demise. "Après le décès de ma mère, quand je pénétrai dans son logement, admirablement en ordre,

1. Georges Haldas, preface to Parmi les hommes, Editions Rencontre, Lausanne 1960, p.15.

mais où elle s'était enfermée farouchement, je ne trouvai plus un seul souvenir sur Lucien Jean, pas un livre, pas une lettre, pas un portrait, l'absence totale à son égard." [1.]

What is clear, both on the testimony of his friends and an examination of his writing, is that Lucien Jean developed what he himself described as a "cult of moderation". On social, political and even family matters his search was always for a measured approach to problems. His flirtation with anarchism was a purely intellectual one which in no way coloured his practical approach to social action. He saw the centre of his personal world as the family, and the conscientiousness with which he fulfilled the role of husband and father was obvious to everyone who visited the household. "C'était la plus forte raison de son amour pour la vie," wrote Georges Valois. "Il ne concevait pas de plus noble fonction pour l'homme que celle de Père de Famille." [2.] As we have seen, Charles-Louis Philippe, himself lacking any secure family base, modelled many of the domestic scenes in his La Mère et l'enfant on his personal experience of the Jean family.

The need to provide for this family determined both Jean's philosophical and practical approach to labour. While never denying its ability to diminish human individuality and freedom, he accepted as desirable the order it imposed on human action. The mere discipline of working was of much greater importance than the nature of the work itself. [3.] This was, for Jean, the

1. Quoted by Louis Lanoizelée in his Lucien Jean: L'Ecrivain-l'Apôtre, Paris 1952, p.53.
2. Georges Valois, "Lucien Jean", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 February 1910, p.40.
3. "[...] Ce n'est pas le travail qu'on fait qui compte, c'est la manière dont on le fait." For an appraisal of the effects of Jean's axiom on the writer's philosophy see the preface by Georges Haldas to Parmi les hommes, Editions Rencontre, Lausanne 1960, p.11.

only dignified course to take in a system where the labourer's necessity to work was immutable. In a letter to Emile Guillaumin (16 April 1904) the fundamental pessimism in his world view is succinctly expressed, and suggests that the rural proletariat have certain advantages denied their urban counterparts: "Le travailleur agricole se trouve en lutte contre la grande force cosmique. Il est l'homme nu sur la terre nue, sur la terre à qui il devra arracher son fruit, en face du ciel terrible qui le menace de tout son imprévu. C'est vraiment une chose tragique et éternelle. Mais le travailleur des villes lutte contre un adversaire plus tenace, jamais endormi: l'âpreté humaine. Il est une roue dans une machine. Jamais, il n'a ce sentiment de triomphe que fait dire à Tiennon, „étant chef de ferme, je me sentais un peu roi.„" [1].

His stoicism in the face of social fact was not total --- as his syndicalist activities attest --- but it did shape both his perception of his own class and the role of proletarian literature. He made no superior claims for such a literature, maintaining that it formed a part of the nation's literary heritage and was not meant to supplant it. Working-class experience was neither more nor less valid than any other and its expression should reflect that equality. In his review of Jean's Parmi les hommes, Michel Arnauld observed that, "/Jean/ n'érige pas les lois de sa nature en loi du monde; il s'abstient de diviniser les préférences de son coeur /.../ Ces réalités modestes il les organise et les cultive, en respectant les liens que l'expérience lui découvre entre elles et l'ordre universel." [2].

1. See Louis Lanoizelée, Lucien Jean: L'Ecrivain-l'Apôtre, p.69. Compare, however, Jean's letter to Georges Valois (November 1902) in which he warns his friend not to give too much credence to René Ghil who stresses the strand of pessimism running through Jean's work: "N'écoutez pas les rabachages de Ghil. La vie vaut la peine qu'on la vive, n'importe comment." (Ibid., p.66.)

2. Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 July 1910, p.117.

He was, as far as his own class was concerned, a purist, affirming an intrinsic value in the action of labour. His syndicalist efforts were pursued with the intention of strengthening the bond between worker and task by alleviating injustices in remuneration and by improving working conditions. The concept of gradually freeing the proletariat from their origins by raising standards of living was anathema to him. In his history of French literature, Henri Clouard identifies this refusal to refashion the image of the proletariat as Lucien Jean's supreme significance as a worker-writer: "Au plus beau temps des Universités populaires Jean affichait la volonté de ne pas flatter le peuple; Lucien Jean entendait ne pas déclasser les travailleurs et les maintenir à leur travail." [1].

Both actively and passively Jean encouraged the literary activities of a small circle of worker-writers. Apart from sponsoring the review Aujourd'hui, he held informal literary reunions at his flat every Saturday evening. With Charles-Louis Philippe, other members of the group included a future editor of L'Action française, Georges Valois, the music critic Prod'homme, novelists Léon Frapié and Eugène Montfort, and the poet Michel Yell. Above all it was the example of his well ordered and intimate family life and the consideration he showed to writers from all backgrounds which influenced those who came into contact with him.

Almost all the recorded reminiscences about this man mention a single quality: bonté. Charles-Louis Philippe first met Jean in 1898 when he entered the Hôtel de Ville to take up a post in the "Service technique des Egouts" and was immediately impressed by Jean's humility and his capacity for work. Their common

1. Henri Clouard, Histoire de la littérature française; 1885 à 1914, p.514.

interest in writing cemented the friendship and Philippe frequently discussed his literary activities with Jean both privately and in the forum of the Saturday evening meetings. Valery Larbaud, who was introduced by Philippe to Jean, remarked on the interaction between the two men: "Lucien Jean /.../ fut en littérature son disciple et un peu son maître en philosophie."[1] Christian Sénéchal, too, maintained that, "Sans Lucien Jean, Charles-Louis Philippe n'aurait peut-être pas aussi nettement pris conscience de sa vraie vocation."[2] In his monograph on Jean, Louis Lanoizelée recognised that the influence on Philippe was as much personal as literary, that Philippe's volatile temperament was calmed in the presence of his friend: "Lucien Jean a eu, en effet, une influence saine et bienfaisante sur Philippe. Nul ne sait où aurait pu se fourvoyer l'auteur de Bubu, sans l'humaine présence et le foyer bénit du modest employé de l'Hôtel de Ville."[3] Georges Valois reminded readers of his article in the N.R.F. that not only was Jean "le meilleur des amis et le plus fraternel des maîtres" but also that he played a very concrete role in Philippe's novels, lending much of his

1. Valery Larbaud, Ce Vice impuni la lecture, p.291.

2. Christian Sénéchal, Les Grands Courants de la littérature française contemporaine, p.73. Compare the following distinction made by Georges Haldas between the style of Jean and Philippe: "/Le style de Philippe/, voluptueux, est celui d'un éternel amant (mais qui aspire à autre chose). Lucien Jean, lui, semble être naturellement père et responsable. /La faiblesse chez Philippe c'est/ une surabondance d'impressions et de griserie verbale. /Celle de Jean/ c'est un abus de l'allégoire et de la volonté symbolique." Préface to Parmi les hommes, Editions Rencontre, Lausanne 1960, p.18.

3. Louis Lanoizelée, Lucien Jean: L'Ecrivain-l'Apôtre, p.30. See also Albert Fournier, "Charles-Louis Philippe: Cinquante ans après sa mort", Europe, September 1960, p.7. "/Jean/ a peu écrit. Mais il eut auprès de Philippe, et sur le groupe des écrivains qui l'ont fréquenté, pendant ces dix années de tâtonnements l'influence d'un maître, donnant à tous l'exemple

own character to the figure of Louis Buisson in Bubu de Montparnasse and to Félicien Teyssèdre in Croquignole. [1.]

Emile Guillaumin and Eugène Montfort were also recipients of a kindly concern taken by Jean in their work. Guillaumin especially, always concerned to have his interests properly represented in Paris, was grateful for the support he found. Jean had written him a glowing tribute on the publication of La Vie d'un simple. "En vous priant de m'envoyer votre livre, Philippe savait combien j'aurais de plaisir à le lire. Et c'est, en effet, un très beau livre, grave, plein, et que je crois définitif sur le paysan français." [2.] Montfort admitted that it was Jean's sense of justice, balance and goodness which most affected him and that he tried to make those principles his own in his writing. "Lucien Jean", he wrote, "dominait par la vérité. Jamais une pensée basse ou injuste n'avait habité son beau front." [3.] In Jean's work any tension between the twin poles represented by Nietzsche and Dostoievsky --- noted so often in Philippe's writing --- was resolved firmly in favour of the Russian. The triumph of the spirit is manifest in one of its forms by the survival of the human qualities of compassion and patience among the labouring poor in their confrontation with capitalist society. "Au-delà de toutes les abjections physiques et morales des êtres," wrote Haldas, "une possibilité de plénitude réelle. Bref, au-delà des horreurs du mal, le tissu lumineux de l'être." [4.]

> de la bonté. Ce blagueur de Philippe, mauvaise tête et bon coeur, avec ses histoires de femmes qui encombraient sa vie, redevenait sérieux auprès de Lucien Jean."

1. See Georges Valois, "Lucien Jean", Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 February 1910, pp.39-45.
2. See the letter of 16 April 1904 reproduced in Louis Lanoizelée's Lucien Jean: L'Ecrivain-l'Apôtre, p.68.
3. Quoted by Michel Arnauld in his review of Parmi les hommes, Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 July 1910, p.118.
4. Preface to Parmi les Hommes, Editions Rencontre.

Parmi les hommes.

Jean's appeal was a catholic one and could attract men of such varying political and social convictions as the socialist editor of L'Enclos, Louis Lumet and the monarchist Georges Valois of L'Action Française. It was Valois himself who, after Jean's death, gathered his various nouvelles and récits and in 1910 had them published in one volume entitled Parmi les hommes. It was he, too, who wrote the foreword to this first edition. [1].

"Ni grand artiste, ni visionnaire, ni prophète, pas plus que réformateur social, Lucien Jean nous apparaît comme un exemple de ce que peut devenir, en perfection, un homme qui n'est pas exceptionnellement doué dans un domaine particulier." [2]. This observation by Haldas adequately points to the significance of Lucien Jean and the reason for his inclusion, however brief, in this study of worker-writers. Less ambitious in scope than the other novelists, this essayist and storyteller illustrates by the style and polish of his literary production of what the sensitive working man, aided by basic education and a receptive public, was capable. Jean's interest in literature was total and his approach sophisticated, although he could never allow himself the luxury of full time writing. He is included, also, because of the direct influence he had on Charles-Louis Philippe, the most significant of the writers covered by this thesis and, through Philippe, because of his association with Guillaumin and Marguerite Audoux.

Lausanne 1960, p.12.

1. Parmi les hommes, Editions Mercure de France, Paris 1910. One subsequent edition was published by Editions Rencontre (Lausanne 1960) and it is from this that all textual references here are taken.
2. Georges Haldas, preface to Parmi les hommes, Lausanne 1960, p.13.

The compilers of Parmi les hommes divided the work into the following six sections: "Nouvelles", "Petits caractères", "Petites gens de la cité", "Pages retrouvées", "Notes critiques" and "Poèmes". Both the second and the third sections are chiefly a series of character sketches based on Jean's observations on the ordinary people in and around the Ile de la Cité. [1] The "Pages retrouvées" and "Notes critiques" sections contain essays on literary and philosophical subjects ranging from the nature of art, the value of literary prizes and the futility of violent social action to critical appraisals of the works of Charles-Louis Philippe, Gide, Gorky and Thomas Hardy. As the volume contains fifty-one separate titles, a systematic evaluation of each is impossible within the compass of this work. It must be sufficient here to select several representative entries for comment in order to convey something of Jean's particular contribution to working class literature.

Although most were unedited, some of the entries which constitute Parmi les hommes had been published before Jean's death in such periodicals as L'Ermitage, La Plume and the Mercure de France. [2] As early as 1907 Henri Ghéon had seen in one of the short stories the promise of an unusual literary talent. Reviewing "Dans le jardin", he remarked that, "A peine un petit souffle de „justice„ passe-t-il dans les contes de

1. See Jean de Gourmont's article in Mercure de France, January-February 1912, pp.608-609. Lucien Jean's great achievement was, according to this critic, his ability to transform the particular elements of his severely restricted experience into works containing a much broader appeal: "C'est surtout par sa fenêtre que Lucien Jean a regardé la vie [...]".

2. See the Bibliography to this thesis, Part Two, under "Lucien Jean" for a list of those writings which had been published.

M. Lucien Jean. On peut n'y point penser. „Dans le jardin„ nous révèle une âme très tendre avec de la noblesse, de l'ironie et de la grâce et un don délicat et simple de la langue. Pour n'être pas encore tout à fait une oeuvre, c'est déjà plus qu'une promesse." [1] Two years later André Gide wrote to Ghéon saying that he had been following with considerable interest the series of Jean's writing appearing in the literary journals. Of the collection "Petites gens de la cité" which appeared in L'Ermitage (February 1902 and January 1903) he observed that, "Les pages de Lucien Jean [...] sont bonnes, excellentes parfois." [2]

The publication of Parmi les hommes in 1910 was greeted with enthusiasm by Rachilde in the Mercure de France. She noted in particular its clarity of thought and presentation, Jean's ability to "classer méthodiquement ses observations," and the author's talent for extracting extraordinary significance from ordinary subjects: "Lucien Jean n'a pas choisi ses héros parmi les héros, il les a pris parmi les hommes, ceux qui tournent en rond dans le bocal d'une existence morne [...] Il les aime [...] surtout peut-être pour la difficulté littéraire qu'il y a à rendre bien vivante leur terne personnalité." [3]

One of the most favourable receptions accorded Parmi les hommes first appeared in the Italian socialist review Divenire Sociale (Rome, 1 June 1910). In it the Marxist critic Georges Sorel viewed the book --- although there is absolutely no evidence that Jean himself did the same --- as merely preparatory to a later and more comprehensive work cut short by the

1. L'Ermitage, July 1901, p.79.

2. See Gide's letter of 10 January 1903. Henri Ghéon - André Gide, Correspondance: 1897-1944, vol.I, Paris 1976, p.492.

3. Mercure de France, 1 May 1910, pp.119-120.

early death of the author: "Ces pièces seraient très propres à intéresser un critique avisé qui les prendrait pour ce qu'elles furent aux yeux de Lucien Jean, pour des exercices qu'un homme exceptionnellement consciencieux avait composés en vue de se préparer à entreprendre une oeuvre définitive." [1.] While denigrating Charles-Louis Philippe's credentials as a proletarian writer ("Philippe, qu'on a voulu faire passer pour l'aède de la pauvreté, avait reçu toute l'instruction scientifique que peuvent donner les lycées de provinces [...]"), Sorel saw in the example of Lucien Jean the flowering of a true workers' literature: "Nous voyons dans [Parmi les hommes] comment un véritable prolétaire a cherché à exprimer les tendances qui lui semblaient être les plus fondamentales, les plus nobles et les plus efficaces du mouvement syndicaliste. Ainsi un livre qui a pu paraître secondaire à beaucoup de professionnels de la critique littéraire, prendrait une importance majeure aux yeux du philosophe." [2.]

A critic of more exalted stature, Henry Poulaille, regarded Jean's subtlety of style as the characteristic making his writing superior to that of his more famous friend and colleague at the Hôtel de Ville: "Le meilleur de Philippe, sans doute le devons-nous à Lucien Jean. C'est beaucoup certes, mais pour si petite, quant au volume, que soit l'oeuvre écrite de Lucien Jean, on ne saurait ne pas la placer à sa place. Très haut

1. Georges Sorel, "D'un écrivain prolétaire," reprinted in his Matériaux d'une théorie du prolétariat, Paris 1919, p.288.

2. Ibid., p.292. Compare Michel Arnauld's review of Parmi les hommes, Nouvelle Revue Française, 1 July 1910, p.115. "Une fois de plus, au souvenir de Charles-Louis Philippe, nous associons celui de Lucien Jean. Il faut les aimer ensemble puisqu'ils s'aimèrent l'un l'autre, gagnèrent à se connaître, et firent tous deux leur tâche avec le même amour."

[...] Le ton est plus au diapason de la sensibilité humaine que chez l'auteur de Bubu." [1.]

In general, Jean's art seems weakest when it is most --- to use Sorel's term --- "consciencieux". A preciousness in his style often emerges in the form of classical allegory which, while displaying an impressive breadth of reading and self-instruction, frequently obscures meaning rather than elucidates it behind a stylistic tour de force reminiscent of the Parnassians. It would certainly have placed much of his work beyond the comprehension of his working-class public.

The most striking example of this is "Le Dernier Chant de Marsyas", one of the nouvelles in Parmi les hommes. Here he presents the incompatibility of what he calls "art naturel" and "art cérébral", of Natur and Geist. Marsyas the flute playing satyr is challenged by Apollo to a contest pitting the former's instrument against the god's lyre. The wild Marsyas and his song represent the spontaneous and irrepressible themes taken from nature --- passion, love, violence, death --- to inspire art, while Apollo embodies for Jean the contrived intellectualism which he saw at the base of most literary schools. The contest is to be presided over by Minerva and the Muses, and the penalty for losing to Apollo is to be flayed alive. That Jean viewed the contemporary artistic scene with some dismay, considering much of value to be stifled beneath generic labels and the necessity to accommodate the established norms of influential journals, is manifest in the satyr's defeat and subsequent execution. The choice of a classically based

1. Henry Poulaille, Nouvel Age littéraire, Paris 1930, pp.243-244.

allegory, however, seems not the best vehicle for advancing the cause of a less fettered approach to literature, and renders Jean vulnerable --- at least from the point of view of the uncultured people --- to charges of the very intellectualism he is trying to attack.

He is much more convincing when the classicial pretensions are abandoned and he relies on the events in the ordinary lives of ordinary people to convey his message. One of the best of his stories is "Un vieil homme" which sets out to portray in microcosm the triumph --- but decidedly not the glory --- of strength's victory over weakness.

The events centre around M. Anthoine, a middle-aged expéditionnaire employed at the Hôtel de Ville, and a youthful group of friends who frequent the same café as the widower Anthoine, or "père Matelas" as they call him because of the chequered material of his suit. One evening the youths notice him surreptitiously looking at the girlfriend of Thiéry, the leader of the little group, and they decide to cure him of this habit. With the girl's consent, a note is addressed to père Matelas who is led to believe that his appreciative glances are not unwelcome. Ecstatic at the thought that, at forty, his life might indeed be beginning again he proposes marriage by return of post and arranges a rendez-vous in the gardens of Notre-Dame. Père Matelas and the girl meet at the appointed hour, but the youths are present as well and the trick is exposed. The distressed victim tries to attack Thiéry but is himself struck to the ground as the friends disperse. The real action ends there, but the pathos of the situation is exploited only when, several months later, the first person narrator --- himself one of the band --- returns to the café and sees M. Anthoine, who appears much the same, through the window:

"[...] et pourtant, dans le pli creux de ses yeux, dans l'affaissement de sa tête, dans son air douleureusement distrait, se lisaient une fatigue infinie et la mort définitive de sa jeunesse." [1]. The victory of gratuitous cruelty over the naïve bonté represented by père Matelas is both foreshadowed and underscored by certain of the narrator's observations in the café just before the first encounter with the widower. The youth is staring at an aquarium in which fish are attacking a dying lizard and eating away at it while it still lives. The parallel with the human behaviour in this story is obvious, although there is one significant difference. The fish, at least, are obeying the natural law whereby the strong feed on the weak, while M. Anthoine's tormentors can claim no such defence. Like the downtrodden characters who people Philippe's novels, the abject in Parmi les hommes resign themselves to exploitation and, at best, can hope to gain some dignity by submitting patiently.

The same theme of patient suffering combines, in "Souvenirs de l'hôpital", with the satiric edge to Jean's writing to produce a more effective nouvelle. There seems little doubt that the inspiration for this story came from the author's own experience of hospital during a lifetime of chronic ill health. Here Jean uses the setting to present in microcosm traditional themes of Western literature: love, jealousy, death and social injustice, among others. Manipulating the various characters confined to the ward Jean achieves, through the eyes of a first person narrator and fellow sufferer, a dominant impression of vitality and the indomitability of the human spirit. Even among the lowest reaches of society, represented here by the impoverished patients in the ward, there persists the conviction that life, on whatever terms, is preferable to death.

1. "Un vieil homme", Mercure de France, 1 March 1905, p.95.

This is the very antithesis of a romantic hymn to life and is enhanced and not diminished by use of the realistic detail in which it is conveyed. An inoperable patient's simple joy at being able still to feel the sun's warmth is typical of the positive approach to life still exhibited by society's dregs:

> Une tumeur lui couvrait le front et descendait sur l'oeil droit. Il était trop vieux pour que l'on osât l'opérer; on s'était contenté d'inciser la tumeur et d'y mettre des drains. Il se levait encore et marchait un peu. Il n'avait pas la force d'aller jusqu'au jardin, car il y avait des marches à descendre, mais il se traînait jusqu'au couloir où arrivait le soleil. Là, il tournait vers la lumière, vers la chaleur, son oeil ouvert et sa face hérissée de poils blancs. Il étendait ses mains noueuses qui tremblaient, et disait: --- Ha! Ça fait du bien, ça fait du bien! [1].

Juxtaposed with the pathos of such a character is Raphaël, the archetype of the growing band of self-educated socialists who were trying, at the turn of the century, to radicalise working class opinion by --- especially in Paris --- dominating the constituent unions of the C.G.T. Raphaël is a revolutionary who cannot restrain himself from preaching his violent gospel even to those about to leave this life. "Vous vous figurez", he remarks, "que c'est un mot perdu... pas du tout. C'est un clou enfoncé au bon endroit, et ça tient." [2]. His is the romantic utopianism of the nineteenth century whose concept of a perfectible social order is alien to Jean, and the satirical intent of his description is clear:

> Raphaël [...] lisait, et de préférence des livres où l'illusion du bonheur humain s'affirme avec force et simplicité. Il n'aimait pas les sociologues modernes, à qui la méthode scientifique donne un aspect

1. Parmi les hommes, Lausanne 1960, p.66.

2. Ibid., p.60.

> sec et vigoureux. Ce qu'il lisait, c'était Rousseau, c'était Michelet, c'était Lamennais, dont il goûtait le lyrisme comme une musique [...] Il lisait aussi les Maximes d'Epictète et s'émerveillait que l'on eût des choses aussi vraies si longtemps avant nous. [1.]

The fastidious egalitarianism of the man completes a picture of sterile, if well meaning, socialism. On one occasion the ward receives some small cakes from the hospital management to celebrate a national holiday. Raphaël disposes of his in the lavatory because he detests charity. "Sais-tu ce que je fais ici?" he asks the narrator. "Je me fais nourrir par la Société, et je ne fiche rien pour elle." [2.] When it is suggested that he might at least have distributed his share to the other hungry patients he retorts that, "Ils n'y ont pas plus droit que moi," and the result is that they all finish by having less.

Jean shows himself most truly "parmi les hommes" in the series of character sketches which comprise the "Petites gens de la cité." He takes as his point of departure here the humble inhabitants of a single street in the Ile de la Cité. "[...] Dans cette vieille rue sont beaucoup de gens remarquables et ignorés. Bien que je ne puisse les tirer de l'oubli, je voudrais dire de quelques-uns la vie modeste et les vertus familières." [3.] There is, for example, the Marèle couple who, on their customary Sunday walks, "[promenaient] confortablement une bonne et vieille et solide amitié." Their obvious mutual affection does not preclude, however, ritual and verbally violent arguments whenever the husband returns late for supper.

1. Parmi les hommes, p.71.
2. Ibid., p.73.
3. Ibid., p.160.

On such occasions he is greeted by a stream of abuse of which the following is typical:

> --- Ah! vieux salaud, te voilà enfin rentré! Qu'est-ce que tu as fichu encore jusqu'au présent! Tu as été te soûler, je suis sûre que tu sens l'absinthe à plein bec. Ou bien tu es allé voir tes ordures de femmes. A soixante-sept ans, si ce n'est pas dégoûtant! Vieux cochon, vieille saloperie..." [1].

This tirade is broken only by her question, which is asked "doucement", about whether he would prefer onions in the omelette she is preparing.

Besides presenting an effective sketch of a working-class couple married long enough never to take too seriously each other's faults, this description of the Marèle household conveys a sense of humour in Jean's writing much more appealing than the tendency to satiric comment found in his allegorical work. If the dialogue often betrays a taste for linguistic realism, Jean never extends the principle to his descriptive style. He does not rely on accumulation of detail to attempt a 'complete' psychological portrait of his subject. Unlike the realists, he isolates the single dominant trait he perceives in each character and makes that the key by which that character's significance may be explored.

M. Blériot, who makes wicker bird cages, is a sober and methodical man six days a week. It is, however, his activities on the seventh which reveal Blériot's true significance. Every Monday he leaves his one room flat and, just as methodically, proceeds to get himself monumentally drunk. It is difficult not to admire the compassionate sketch of this amusing character whose foible Jean, with a flourish of grandiose hyperbole,

1. Parmi les hommes, p.161.

treats as Blériot's means of self expression:

> Mais le père Blériot est soûl avec splendeur, avec magnificence. Il l'est et répète avec force: Je suis soûl! Je suis soûl! --- Il le répète sans ostentation, mais parce qu'il sent que c'est une vérité profonde, et que c'est l'oeuvre de sa volonté. 1.

Jean again exploits the humour of a particular situation. Not only is the man's drunkenness an honest and more than obvious one, it also endows him with a bogus moral authority which tolerates no trivial fraternising:

> Si quelqu'un le croise et lui souhaite bonne nuit, si des gens attardés traversent la cour en échangeant des adieux, la voix du père Blériot, formidable, roulant toute l'ivresse d'une journée bien remplie, les rappelle au silence par une exclamation unique: „Ta gueule!„ Et l'on se tait, tellement c'est dédaigneux et péremptoire, 2.

Far from resorting to an inventory of realistic detail to evoke the daily lives of his characters, Jean provides just enough information to indicate place of residence, work, and the briefest of physical description of the character himself. The introduction of Blériot into the narrative is a typical example of this technique:

> Dès le premier jour que je vis le père Blériot, je connus qu'il était d'une race divine. Il avait en effet ce regard droit, ces paupières immobiles à quoi les hommes reconnaissent les dieux sous une forme mortelle. Le père Blériot a choisi, pour vivre parmi nous, une enveloppe simple et un peu rugueuse, et un état modeste: il fait des cages pour les petits oiseaux. 3.

Jean's whimsical reference to the 'divine' nature of Blériot also reminds the reader that classical allusions are never

1. Parmi les hommes, p.164.

2. Ibid., p.164.

3. Ibid., p.162.

far from the surface in his work. [1.]

It is a humanitarian bias which sees both the individual and society --- like the satyr Marsyas --- as sensual entities and not intellectual abstractions, which colours Jean's philosophy and unites all his writings, even when they appear at their most allegorical. In terms of the "Petites gens de la cité", he portrays this conception in microcosm as he describes one of the houses, teeming with human life, awaking with the first light of morning: "Si l'homme était, comme on le dit, un animal raisonnable, il serait profondément malheureux de trouver ce matin semblable à tous les autres. Mais il est avant tout, heureusement, un sang qui roule, des poumons qui s'emplissent d'air frais, un ventre... Il vit d'abord, et ensuite, parfois, se hausse jusqu'à la comprendre." [2.]

From the "Pages retrouvées" section of Jean's work, his essay "De l'art" clarifies his optimistic approach to both life and art. Despite the wretchedness of much of the human condition, life is on balance good and worth living, and it is this positive will to live that the writer should strive to capture. The moral value of a workers' literature lies precisely in the fact that the attainment and expression of such an ethic is won despite greater obstacles than those encountered by middle class writers. As literature, the result would not necessarily be better or even equal to that of the bourgeois but the potential moral authority of the working class writer might appear to be more firmly based as one

1. Compare a later introduction of two waggoners into the narrative: "Ugène et Phonse ont des camions jumeaux et chacun deux chevaux bruns et un chien noir; mais ils sont aussi peu semblables qu'Ajax et Ulysse." (Parmi les hommes, p.169).

2. Ibid., p.177.

deriving from adversity overcome:

> L'art social, mais c'est la nôtre:
> C'est celui qui clamera, par-dessus
> le chant monotone des esclaves, le
> cri de l'homme libre. C'est lui qui
> dira et qui rendra sensible l'impéris-
> sable vérité: la vie est bonne, la
> vie est belle, et la vraie joie n'est
> pas de satisfaire bassement nos besoins,
> mais de faire naître chez nous et chez
> les hommes de belles pensées et de beaux
> désirs. 1.

In "Panem et artes" he sounds the note of reason that is often missing among both writers and supporters of the proletariat, and which lies at the heart of his own measured tone as a writer. While recognising his natural preference for things of his own social class, he refuses to allow such bias to cloud either his literary judgment or, indeed, his evaluation of the individual. "Pour des raisons qui sont de mon sang," he admits, "je préférerai ce maçon, ce cocher, ce petit marchand, ce sergent de ville, aux [...] riches [...] Mais ma raison ne me permet pas, malgré mon coeur, son sang et ses raisons, de croire que les premiers aient plus de vertus que les seconds." 2.

1. Parmi les hommes, p.193.

2. Ibid., p.207.

Conclusion.

The purpose of this thesis has been twofold. First, I have attempted to trace a brief history of the evolution of the working class motif in French literature leading to its culmination in the twenty-five years preceding the Great War. It was important to show the process by which contemplation of this subject became an acceptable literary endeavour both among writers and among a public used to other fare. Of necessity much of the consideration here was for the figure of the peasant, an urban proletariat not emerging before the rapid development of cities and the disintegration of the artisanat after 1850. I have tried to analyse this historical synopsis in some depth, considering a sound knowledge of this branch of literary history essential in evaluating accurately the succeeding period 1890-1914.

A perspective seemed especially necessary, as not only chronological transmutation of a theme was involved but also a change in the nature of authorship itself, with working-class writers for the first time taking up the pen as spokesmen for their own class. To judge how far the five proletarian writers under examination here added something new to the corpus of French literature it was necessary to identify in which respect they perpetuated conventions inherited from their middle-class predecessors. Balzac, George Sand and Zola, in particular, proved rich fields of comparison, with the example of Sand clarifying the linguistic problems involved in trying to accommodate both idiom and dialect alien to the traditional reading public. Examining the relevant works of such writers also showed the tendency of the middle class to distort the image of the worker either toward the idyllic or the sordid.

Novels, therefore, like Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant or Guillaumin's L'Ennemi de la mort were seen in the one case to extend the pattern established by Sand's François le champi and, in the other, that found in Balzac's Les Paysans.

A description of the progress made both in workers' education and in cheap printing and distribution methods was also essential if the rapidity of the proletariat's involvement in literature was to be properly understood. Such participation was inevitable once an articulate artistic voice among the people could be directed towards a recently educated and, by definition, favourably disposed reading public. However, despite the growth of the penny press and cheap editions which put reading material within the reach of all but the most indigent, the commercial success of such writers as Charles-Louis Philippe and Marguerite Audoux depended upon support from the middle classes, the stronghold of the novel reading public. Although in the particular case of Marie-Claire this interest was attributable to the novelty value attaching to Audoux's personal circumstances, the prolonged success of Philippe and Guillaumin was due to something more than public curiosity. It was the authority which direct experience of a previously under explored milieu gave such writers and the resulting authenticity of its portrayal which must account for much of the attraction.

The 1890-1914 period was a brief and quite unique stage in the development of proletarian literature. It represented both the initial outburst and the swan song of a working-class literature whose primary concerns were aesthetic and not political. With much else, the Great War would change the nature of the working class's perception of itself, as the enforced intimacy of the union sacrée was abandoned and more

effective labour organisation increased pressure on successive governments to draft social legislation. Henry Poulaille's "Ecole Prolétarienne" of the 1930's owed its existence to the preparatory efforts of pre-War writers like the five covered in this study. The difference, however, could hardly be greater. The initial stage of proletarian literary development saw itself --- unlike the overtly didactic "Ecole Prolétarienne" --- as an artistic phenomenon, and it is by the normal literary criteria that it must be judged. In my discussion of the individual works I have attempted to show that they stand or fall depending on the novelist's skill in combining appropriate style with theme. The norms of literary criticism are not to be bent to accommodate newcomers just because an accident of birth placed them amongst the humbler reaches of society. The efforts of writers like Philippe, Guillaumin, Le Roy, Audoux and Jean did not constitute the basis of a new art form for an emerging new class, as some contemporary enthusiasts claimed.

The masterpieces of the genre were undoubtedly Philippe's Bubu de Montparnasse, Guillaumin's La Vie d'un simple and Le Roy's Jacquou le croquant. I have tried to show that these authors succeeded in surmounting a particular social milieu --- while retaining both the authenticity and authority that membership of that class bestowed --- to produce novels with much wider significance. Their success was certainly not uniform and could deteriorate to indulge the mawkish sentimentality of Philippe's La Mère et l'enfant, the cheap sensationalism of Guillaumin's Albert Manceau, adjudant or the melodrama of Le Roy's Mademoiselle de la Ralphie and L'Ennemi de la mort.

What these works had in common --- quite apart from the authors' proletarian beginnings, although clearly resulting from them --- was a preoccupation with the weak. Like Bubu or Albert Manceau, he was not always an admirable character when measured by the yardstick of conventional morality, but the figure of the social inferior provided the basic material from which several thematic permutations derived. What the five writers examined by this thesis were writing about was a social fait accompli with the divisions of rich and poor, strong and weak, appearing to them so natural as most often to remain unchallenged in any serious way.

Although the exceptions here are undoubtedly Jacquou and L'Ennemi de la mort, the thread of determinism which has been detected throughout our study of these works is largely explicable in terms of this acquiescence to the existing social framework. In this respect these novels differ from much working-class literature which has developed over succeeding decades as the labour movement has become increasingly organised and politically active and the workers' expectations and perception of themselves have altered. Most of the proletarian works which emerged from Henry Poulaille's Nouvel Age group and its "Ecole prolétarienne" did so against the sombre backdrop of the depressed 1930's. The financial plight of millions of workers combined with the pessimism of a generation of Frenchmen who had seen their country emerge victorious but ravaged from the First War. This produced a new dynamism --- negative to the extent that it was based on despair but fired by a conviction

that social and economic structures could and must change --- culminating in the Front Populaire experiment. The workers of post-War France lost that certain naïveté of their predecessors who had inhabited a world whose social barriers were relatively immutable. While novels could still be written to evoke an atmosphere of unselfconscious class cohesion and semi-heroic resignation to injustice, like that found in La Mère et l'enfant, La Vie d'un simple or Jacquou le croquant, this emphasis was a deliberately retrospective one which preferred the familiarity of the old to considering the ramifications of the new.

The quarter century preceding the First War was the period in which the seed of proletarian literature, germinating since the mid-nineteenth century, finally broke the surface. It emerged into a situation where the workers were generally literate, the penny press offered potentially universal distribution and where the large middle-class reading public had already been familiarised with the proletarian motif by writers like George Sand, Zola and the Goncourt brothers. The significance of the five under study here clearly does not lie in originality of choice of theme, but rather in the unique perspective which they were by birth and experience able to bring to it. If novels like Philippe's Marie Donadieu or Guillaumin's Albert Manceau, adjudant received particularly hostile reception, they did so not because their detractors could question their veracity --- as one could attack Balzac's Les Paysans or Zola's La Terre ---but rather because they failed in some way to conform to prevailing middle-class

critical criteria.

On the whole, the proletarian literature of this period was exposed to such attacks because for the most part it relied for its propagation on middle-class publication. While they were often indulged for their novelty value --- indeed, this proved to be the major attraction in Marguerite Audoux's Marie-Claire --- they remained subject to conventional literary norms. Those pre-War periodicals and reviews with leftist or populist sympathies which did welcome the development of proletarian involvement in literature lacked --- with the important exception of L'Effort libre --- sufficient distribution stature to make any significant impact. A new facet to the national literature was certainly emerging between 1890 and 1914, but remained largely unmatched by corresponding changes in the organs of literary criticism until the post-War efforts of such as Henry Poulaille and Michel Ragon.

This was a problem which little worried the five authors examined here. Leaving aside both Le Roy and Jean who did not actively seek publication of any sort, and Audoux who simply acquiesced --- much to the irritation of Arnold Bennett --- to the designs of a large publishing house, Philippe and Guillaumin actually courted middle-class patronage. None of the five considered that they were writing anywhere except within the mainstream of national literature and, if devoted to a new social perspective, accepted that their work be judged by established criteria. It was left to critics like Marcel Martinet and Charles

Albert writing in L'Effort libre to make those demands for new criteria which the writers themselves did not envisage. How the proletarian novel developed after the First War from its base established by our five authors and --- of perhaps greater interest --- how the face of criticism itself changed to accommodate it is a complex study and one which exceeds the bounds of this thesis. Central to it would be an examination of the controversy explicit in the confrontation between the "Ecole prolétarienne" and the "Ecole populiste" in the 1930's. Was working-class literature the preserve of those born to the proletariat or could it be written and appreciated by a wider social spectrum? Questions of political commitment and the deliberate harnessing of literature to it would also require examining. It must be enough here to state that while the roots of this controversy and all it entailed lay firmly in the proletarian movement between 1890 and 1914, it was for another generation of writers to dissect and analyse what Charles-Louis Philippe admitted in his own writing to be merely "une impression de classe."[1].

If thematically the five writers examined here can be linked by a common emphasis on the weak in society, they have shown greater divergence in the style which they have applied. In the case of Audoux, at least, the result appears more an inevitable than a deliberate one. She harboured one 'original' book within her; Marie-Claire, being the product of her orphaned childhood and impoverished beginnings as a Parisian sempstress. Later novels were largely reworkings of the elements found earlier in

1. Supra, p.113, n.1.

Marie-Claire and the style never progressed from the dépouillé primitivism one might expect to find in so untutored a writer. If Philippe corrected the spelling in the manuscript of this novel and generally encouraged Audoux in her project, he lent nothing of the colour of his own impressionistic style.

As we have seen, Philippe's flamboyance --- out of control in La Mère et l'enfant while generally harnessed in Bubu de Montparnasse ---resulted largely from a random pattern of readings undisciplined by any formal literary education. His experience of both the countryside around Cérilly and the inner heart of Paris provided the setting and characters for his novels. From these his imagination and those quirks of his personality already noted fashioned the emotionally charged and often violent atmosphere of these works. Concessions to linguistic realism were few, Philippe preferring to vulgarise his idiom by inclusion of common vocabulary rather than any authentic peasant or urban argot.

In this he was very close to his friend Lucien Jean whose characters filled their speech with the rich vocabulary of the capital's lower classes. The difference between the two men lay in Jean's refusal to carry popular idiom from dialogue into narrative. The result was, as we have seen, a more sophisticated finish to his writing which occasionally ran the risk of putting too much distance between the writer and his humble subject matter.

Guillaumin, who treated almost exclusively rural themes, distinguished his writing by incorporating the

studied ralentissement which helped to convey the apparently uncomplicated peasant approach to life. It was his immediate reaction to events, unhindered by any consciously philosophical observations and reinforced by a pattern based on the four seasons, which lent Tiennon in La Vie d'un simple at once his charm and his credibility.

It was Le Roy who did most to attempt linguistic authenticity in his novels. Unlike Guillaumin who, after Tableaux champêtres, abandoned any serious hope of integrating regional speech into his writing, Le Roy experimented with several methods of preserving the Périgord dialect. Direct transcription, annotation, and paraphrasing were all pressed into service with varying degrees of success. It was his early allegiance to the Félibrige which accounts for his enthusiasm, although he early saw the limitations for his own novelistic purposes of the movement's puritanical approach to linguistic conservation.

As the majority of the works examined by this thesis remain unknown to the French --- not to mention the English --- reading public, it has been necessary to reproduce textual passages at greater length than would have been the case in any discussion of novels about which a general knowledge of at least plot could be assumed. In choosing these passages I have tried not only to present appropriate illustration of the critical points under discussion but also to convey the general atmosphere attaching to these novels. If, on balance, they cannot be judged great works, many of them betray sufficient artistry to warrant detailed criticism and, at the same time, to be introduced to a wider readership. Their significance lies in the manner in which literary and social history combined to chronicle the

beginnings of an integration of the peuple into French literary tradition which remains far from complete.

B I B L I O G R A P H Y

The bibliography is composed of two main sections. The first is organised under the authors' names. The entry for each author is divided to register critical reaction to the novels in (1) references specific to the novels, (2) references specific to the author and (3) general reference specific to neither.

The second section is a comprehensive index of the source material consulted for this thesis, including all editions of the relevant novels and all primary material. The Bulletins and Cahiers of the Association des Amis de Charles-Louis Phillippe to which repeated reference is made are published in Moulins. The issues are numbered but not dated, with the Bulletins running from January 1936 and the Cahiers from January 1957.

Unless otherwise indicated, the place of publication is Paris.

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Under each of the five authors treated in this thesis the novels are given first in order of publication. Translations are included immediately following the last French edition of the novel in question. This is succeeded by the list of all other primary material.

When the reader is directed to Part One of the Bibliography the entry will indicate the author and, in parentheses, the relevant section.

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